A SHORT HISTORY OF NAMDHARI SIKHS OF PUNJAB

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A Short History of Namdhari Sikhs of Punjab

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PREFACE

The Namdhari Sikhs of Punjab are generally perceived in the context of Kuka movement. Earliest among the professional historians and scholars who introduced Namdhari Sikhs in this context was Dr. Ganda Singh. He wrote *Kukian Di Vithia* in 1944 and analyzed the revivalist programme of 'Baba Balak Singh' and 'Baba Ram Singh', the founders of the Kuka movement. The former emphasized on *nam-simran* and rejection of ritualism and upholding of moral and ethical values. The latter carried on the mission of his spiritual predecessor. He formed Sant Khalsa and evolved its *rahit*. He made arrangements for the propagation, communication and organization. Baba Ram Singh launched a tirade against the hypocrisy of his contemporary religious leaders. But some unfortunate developments led to confrontration between the Kukas and the British government. Dr. Ganda Singh perceived the Kuka movement in socio-religious terms and Kukas' confrontration with the raj an accident. He also gave his assessment on the status of founders of the Kuka movement. Ganda Singh's formulation and assessment irked the Namdhari writers. They felt as if Ganda Singh's assessment was intentionally partisan on several issues. In response to such writings, Namdhari scholar, Nidhan Singh Alam wrote *Jug Paltaoo Satguru* in 1948 and projected 'Satguru' Ram Singh a revolutionary. Sardul Singh Cavesshar wrote foreword of this book. Lauding Baba Ram Singh, he said that Baba ji directed his "efforts at the moral uplift of the masses, the creation of the spirit of self-confidence and self-sacrifice, the setting up of a parallel Government with a view to oust the foreign domination, the adoption of the cult of swadeshi to free ourselves from economic serfdom, defiance and disobedience of laws that restricted our liberties, and so many other items of national programme that sound so modern and effective in these

days when preaching of revolution has been legalized," Meanwhile, Sant Inder Singh Chakarvarti, under the patronage of his 'Satguru' Partap Singh, undertook a project of writing history. He followed Alam's pattern. In 1955 Nahar Singh wrote *Namdhari Ithas* (Pt I). He too followed Namdhari perspective. Primary contribution of works of Nidhan Singh Alam, Sant Inder Singh Chakarvarti and Nahar Singh lies in the fact they corroborate their contentions with the archival material. Yet they narrated a number of stories exalting the status of their satgurus. They were not professional historians and could not explore archival material adequately.

Fauja Singh and M.M. Ahluwalia, the protagonists of nationalist historiography, published their works in 1965. The former wrote *Kuka Movement: An Important Phase in Punjab's Role in India's Struggle for Freedom* and the later entitled his work *Kukas-The Freedom Fighters of the Punjab.* These titles make absolutely clear the basic assumptions of these historians. Both of them argued that the programme of socio-religious reforms undertaken by Baba Ram Singh was essentially a spade work for political ends. They believed that the motives and concerns of traditional leaders were found in religious idiom which has had been very effective strategy for mass-mobilization. Both historians comprehensively and adequately used archival material for corroborating their arguments. They concluded that the Kuka Sikhs were pioneers in the Indian struggle for freedom. Jaswinder Singh, Namdhari scholar, made serious efforts to dig out more archival material on the Kukas and got it published under the title *Kukas of Note in the Punjab: Kuka Documents 1881,* Namdhari Darbar, Bhaini Sahib 1984 and *Kuka Movement: Freedom Struggle in Punjab,* Atlantic Publishers, New Delhi 1985. The latter work comprises documents for the period from 1880 to 1903. Similarly, Bhai Nahar Singh and Bhai Kirpal Singh did a commendable service to the Namdhari history when they collected documents related to 'Guru' Ram Singh and Kuka Sikhs for the

period from 1863 to 1880 and got them published under the title *Rebels Against the British Rule,* Delhi 1995.

It is essential to mention here that the British officials themselves analysed the Kuka movement on the above mentioned assumptions. In the post-Kuka movement period, they briefly summarized the founding of the Kuka sect, its mission and Kuka outbreak. Denzil Ibbetson who compiled the first Census Report of 1881, incorporated a sketch of Kukas in this report which became a standardized version to be reproduced by the Census officials and scholars subsequently. Sir Muhammad Latif and Sir Lepel Griffin were first two administrator-scholars who reproduced that sketch of the Kukas with slight modification in their respective works. Sir Muhammad Latif, while writing a comprehensive *History of the Punjab: From the Remotest Antiquity to the Present Time* in 1891, included a brief note on the "Kuka Outbreak" in the last chapter of his work. Explaining the 'Kuka Outbreak', he says that 'the Kukas are orthodox sect of the Sikhs'. He mentions the name of its founder Baba Balak Singh, resident of Hazro in Attock District in 1847. On his death in 1862, he was succeeded by (Baba) Ram Singh, who became 'guru of the sect'. For Latif, (Namdhari Guru) "Ram Singh was a man (who) possessed of considerable intellectual ability. He was the son of a carpenter of Mauza Bhaini, in the Ludhiana District. By degrees he acquired a great reputation among his followers for piety and sanctity".[1] Latif explains the Kuka Outbreak in terms of disorderly behaviour of the Namdhari guru's disciples who were 'worked up into religious frenzy' and teachings of the Namdhari Guru became 'more political in their nature'. "Suspicions having been aroused that the objects of Ram Singh and his disciples were not merely religious, but that, under the guise of a religious reformer and a teacher of moral precepts, he harboured deep political designs..."[2] Latif ends his note saying that the outbreak was suppressed and the rebels were either slained or captured. The Namdhari Guru was arrested and deported to Burma. However, Latif down plays the British ruthlessness in

suppressing this outbreak. It is interesting to note that Latif does not mention the subsequent part of the Kuka movement which ended in 1885. It seems that the mention of the subsequent political activities of the Kukas might have forced Latif to perceive their activities in terms of movement. The analysis of the movement requires more space which did not suit to his framework.

Sir Lepel Griffin wrote his work on *Ranjit Singh* which was published in 1892. Lepel Griffin uses the concept of the Kuka movement. He perceived organization of the Namdhari Guru and his 'fanatical disciples' as political organization. He noted that "the original movement was religious, an attempt to reform the Sikh practice and restore it to the character it possessed in the time of Govind Singh. As the sect grew in numbers, its ambition increased, till, at last, it preached a revival of the Khalsa and the downfall of the British Government". Lepel Griffin happened to be the Chief Secretary to the Punjab Government and noted the proceedings of the Kukas which 'caused a great amount of anxiety and trouble.' Lepel Griffin briefly mentions the incidence of Malkerkotla and subsequent punishment given to the Kukas. He says that 'they (Kukas) were not, however, inspite of their seditious teaching interfered with until they broke into open revolt and attacked the Mohamaden Town of Maler Kotla near Ludhiana. The insurrection was put down with great severity and some fifty of the rebels were blown from guns after summary trial. At the same time all the Kuka leaders in different districts of the Punjab were arrested in one night and deported some to Rangoon, others to Aden, and the less important were confined in Punjab Jails'.[3]

The District Gazetteer of Ludhiana, 1904 described the 'Kuka Outbreak' as the "mad attempt" on the part of 'a gang of about 150 of these Kukas, after working themselves up into a state of religious frenzy, started off under the leadership of two Jats of Sakraudi in Patiala territory.' For proving that it was really 'a mad attempt', this Gazetteer gives detail of violence unleashed by the Kuka gang and subsequent loss of life. It ends its note on fixing the

responsibility of this outbreak by saying that "if the Kukas ever had any plans for a rising they must have been completely upset by these insane proceedings of a small body of fanatics, rushing about the country armed with sticks and axes. The people of the villages through which they passed appear to have been scared by them, and the inhabitants of Rurr, where they were captured, deserted their houses in a body on the approach of the band. Of course Ram Singh and his doctrines were responsible for what happened; and he had become a danger to the State, as similar disturbances might be created at any time by his followers. Ram Singh was at once deported to Rangoon and remained a State prisoner till his death in 1885."[4] Thus, the British scholars and Census officials depicted the Kukas as the rebels and the Kuka movement aiming at to dislodge the British government and restore the Khalsa raj. Besides, the Census officials noted that "the Kuka movement appears to be on the decline owing obviously to the disfavour with which the followers of this sect are looked upon in political circles, and the opening created by the Tat Khalsa movement for religious zeal. The number has decreased from 13,788 in 1901 to 4,706."[5] The Census officials also emphasized on the distinct identity of the Kuka Sikhs in terms of Namdhari Guru declaring "himself an incarnation of Guru Gobind Singh" and his followers "wearing the turban, and in carrying a necklace or woolen cord, divided into knots which serve as beads for prayer".[6]

The works of Fauja Singh and M.M. Ahluwalia substantiated the official theme comprehensively. But their works initiated a debate on the nature and character of the Kuka movement. Ganda Singh and Dr. Bhagat Singh refused to accept political perspective of the Kuka movement particularly, its anti-British stance and nationalistic overtones. They got their articles published in *Punjab Past and Present in 1979* and raised some pertinent questions. These articles obliged the scholars including Namdhari scholars to review the conclusions regarding the character of this movement and its impact. Nevertheless, W.H. McLeod's article "The Kukas:

A Millenarian Sect of the Punjab" published in *Punjab Past and Present,* XIII-I, April 1979 added a new perspective of the Kuka movement. McLeod's paradigm of millenarian character of the Kuka movement raised the status of 'Baba' Ram Singh to the *massiha* for the suffering humanity. For McLeod, Namdhari Guru was a charismatic personality visualizing that society which was to be free from the discrimination and exploitation. Thousands of agriculturists and artisans thought that "Baba" was liberator.

From the proceeding discussion it is clear that the focus of studies of Namdhari and Non-Namdhari scholars was on the Kuka Movement of late 19th century. These studies give inadequate space to the activities of the Namdhari Sikhs of 20th century. Similarly, there are a few books on the history of the Namdhari Sikhs which examine the socio-religious, political, cultural and administrative changes. The scope of works of Tara Singh Anjan and Dalip Singh was confined to the role of the Namdhari Sikhs in the struggle for freedom. Their narratives are complimentary to the epilogues of works of Fauja Singh and M.M. Ahluwalia. Very recently, a few Ph.D. Theses have been produced on the Namdhari literature and history. These research works also examine the patriotic and nationalistic sentiments of the Namdhari Sikhs.

This book presents a brief analysis of those socio-religious, political, cultural and administrative changes which have transformed the Namdhari Sikhs into a Sikh sect. In mid 19th century, Namdhari Gurus Balak Singh and Ram Singh revived the Sikh tradition of *bhakti* and exhorted their followers to do *nam-simran.* Moreover, Namdhari Guru Ram Singh formed Sant Khalsa in 1857 for supplanting *malechh* Khalsa. He found that the *malechh* Khalsa was responsible for the collapse of this raj. He oriented the Sant Khalsa in those moral and ethical values for which Guru Gobind Singh's Khalsa stood for. He developed his own system of spiritual orientation, propagation of mission, communication and training in martial art. Such orientation and training was incompatible with colonial cultural institutions. The confrontation of the Namdhari

Sikhs with the allies of colonial role was inevitable as the allies worked for the consolidation of British raj and promotion of its culture. In fact, the British allies, comprising Sikh native rulers and Sardars themselves, perceived a threat to their status from the resurgence of the Namdhari Sikhs. For this reason, the British raj and its allies crushed the Kuka movement for it aimed at the restoration of the Khalsa raj.

The Namdhari Gurus (Hari Singh and Partap Singh) struggled hard to sustain the identity of their followers in the wake of the state-repression and politics of loyalism played by the allies of the colonial state. In the face of this crisis, Namdhari Guru Partap Singh avoided the politics of confrontation and built up rapport with the nationalist forces in early 20th century. Moreover, he responded to the communitarian and national politics. He revamped the tradition of meditation and administrative hierarchy. His leadership paid dividends: 'Baba' Ram Singh and Kuka Sikhs were recognized as the harbingers of the *Swadeshi* and Non-Co-operation movements. Above all, Namdhari Guru made some efforts for rehabilitating those Namdhari followers who were forced to quit West Punjab during the Partition of Punjab (1947). His son and successor 'Satuguru' Jagjit Singh continued the policy of rehabilitation, built up headquarters for multi-purposes and set up new socio-cultural institutions. He patronized the writers and artists. Having witnessed the communal holocaust of 1947, he believed in the policy of communal co-existence and harmony of the post-independence period.

While constructing the text of this book, an attempt has been made to incorporate the view-point of the Namdhari writers and leaders as well. Since the inception of the Kuka movement, the Namdhari writers have produced voluminous literature on the Sikh history and religion and are trying to seek legitimacy to their beliefs and practices. Moreover, the Namdhari leadership is zealously guarding and projecting the identity of its community. For this purpose, they have applied several concepts, terms and words

from the Sikh scriptures and writings of contemporary Sikh scholars. For instance, they address their spiritual masters as *Satgurus*. It is only in this context that the concept of *Satguru* is used in this book.

Notes and References

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2. Op. Cit., p 595..
3. Cited in *Namdhari Sikhs the Pioneer Freedom Fighters*, Namdhari Darbar, Bhaini Sahib, Punjab, 2006, p 80: according to editor-not fifty but sixty six, 49 blown away with guns on 17th Jan. 1872 without trial and one cut to pieces by swords. And sixteen Kukas blown away with guns after summary trial on 18th Jan 1872.
4. *District and States Gazetteers of the Undivided Punjab*, Vol. III & IV, D.K. Publishers' Distributors, New Delhi, 1993 (reprint), p 664.
5. *Census of India 1911: Punjab Report*, Vol. XIV, Part.I, Lahore, Punjab, 1912, p 158.
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GLOSSARY

adharam : Irreligiousness; violation of religious and ethical values.

Adi Granth : (the Guru Granth Sahib), the sacred scripture of the Sikhs recorded by Bhai Gurdas at the instructions of Guru Arjan Dev in 1603-4.

ahalkar : courtier

ahankar : Ego

akal purakh : the one beyond Time', God

akal takhat : throne (*q.v.*(, located immediately adjacent to Harmindir Sahib (*q.v.*, the Golden Temple). One of the five centres of temporal authority in the Panth.

akhand path : 'unbroken reading'; an uninterrupted reading of the entire contents of the Adi Granth performed by a relay of readers

amrit : 'nectar of immorality' , sweetened initiation water used in amrit sanskar

anand-riti/ maryada : a Sikh custom of marriage.

annas : (16 annas equals 1 rupee). This division of the rupee into sixteen annas was adopted by the British from Mughal rulers, although the anna is no longer a coin, having been replaced by the paisa (100 paise equal 1 rupee)

ardasan : letters of Namdhari Guru Ram Singh.

asu-da-mela : Namdhari festival held in the month of September/October.

avtar leela	: God's game
avtar	: an incarnation of a deity, usually Vishnu
avtarvad	: a belief in the continuity of an incarnation of a deity.
baba	: 'father', a term of respect applied to holy men.
baisakhi	: New Year's Day in rural Punjab, the first day of the month of Baisakh or Visakh (April).
bani	: word of God- works of the Gurus and other poets included in the Sikh sacred scriptures.
baran-maha	: is a form of folk poetry.
bir	: volume.
bhagat	: devotee, one who practices bhagati or devotion.
bhagvad geeta	: the Song of the Lord', forms part of the sixth book of the Mahabharata and contains Krishna's teaching and revelation to the warrior Arjuna.
bhajan	: a mystic/sacred word.
bhajan-bandagi	: meditating on the name of God.
bhangi-musla	: a Muslim (scavenger) of low caste.
bhog	: performing recitation of Granth Sahib.
bila	: English
chaubis avatar	: Hindu mythology of incarnation.
chaunke charna	: Hindu ritual.
chhapar	: roof made of wood.
chimta	: a musical instrument
chini horse	: white horse
chithian	: letters

dak : postal order

dalit : a contemporary word for people of lower caste.

damari : a small coin, equated to paisa

dan : charity

darbar : a court of leave. also the executive government of a native state

darbaris : courtiers

dargah : court of Akal Purakh.

Dasam Granth : 'the Book of the Tenth (Guru);, a collection of writings attributed to Guru Gobind Singh

dastar : turban

daswand : one-tenth donation of earning

dera : camp, seminary; dwelling place of a saint and followers.

desee ghee : clarified butter.

desh-bhagati : patriotism

devi : a Goddess. Used to refer to thousands of local goddesses as well as to the consorts of the great gods and the goddess called Devi or Mahadevi.

devidavaras : Hindu temples

dhad : a drumlet

dhadi : bard;a minstrel, among the Sikhs.

dhadi-jathas : groups of minstrels

dhanaand : wealthy

dharamsala : place of worship of Namdhari Sikhs. also a place of worship for early Sikh Panth (later Gurdwara).

dilruba : musical instrument

diwan : court; minister of state; assembly; assembly hall; congregation; collected verse of a poet.

firangee : British

gau : cow

gharana : representative genealogy of classical music

giani : a reputed Sikh scholar; a Sikh theologian

granth : the '[Sacred] Volume', the Adi Granth or Guru Granth Sahib (*qq.v.*).

granthi : custodian of a Gurdwara, the professional reader of Guru Granth Sahib; the functionary in charge of a Gurdwara.

gurbani : compositions of the Gurus.

gursikh : the Sikh who is devoted to the Guru.

gurbilas : hagiographic literature on the lives of the Sikh gurus emphasizing their heroic qualities. Most works in this genre date back to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century

gurdwara a Sikh temple

gur-mantar : a mystical formula given by a guru to a disciple

gurmat : the teachings of the Gurus; Sikhism.

Gurmukhi : Lit., from the mouth of the guru; the script in which the Punjabi language is written

guru granth : the Granth (*q.v.*) in its role as Guru.

guru sabad : from the Guru's mouth

halal : flesh of an animal killed in accordance with Muslim ritual whereby it is bled to death while the Kalima is pronounced (cf. *jhatka, kuttha, qq.v.*).

havan-yag : ritual fire ceremony practiced by the Namdhari Sikhs (*q.v.*) Also called a *hom.*

holla : religious festival

hukmanama : 'letter of command' (of Namdhari Guru); document containing a command or a request issued by one of the latter Gurus to an individual or a sangat (*q.v.*); a similar document issued to the Panth by the Sarbat Khalsa from Akal Takhat (*qq.v.*).

Inam : lit., a reward; an assignment of revenue district, and implying the idea of reward

Inqlabi : revolutionary

ishwar-bhagati : worship of Almighty

Isnan : holy bath

jagirdar : holder of land assignment; an assignee.

jagir : an assignment of land revenue in lieu of salary

jama suped : loose long shirt

janam sakhi : hagiographic narrative, especially of the life of Guru Nanak

janeu : a scared thread of a caste Hindu

jatha : a group, a band; used particularly for Akali volunteers during their agitations.

jathedar : the leader of a *jatha;* a leader-organizer of the Shiromani Akali Dal.

kachh : a pair of breeches, which must not extend below the knees, worn as one of the Five Ks (*q.v.*).

kakkars : five items (each beginning with the initial 'k') which Sikhs of the Khalsa (*q.v.*) must wear: *kes, kangha, kachh, kirpan,* and *kara* (*qq.v.*).

kalyuga : the fourth and last of the cosmic ages; the age of degeneracy.

kammi or kamins : village menials

karah prasad : sacramental food dispensed in *gurdwaras/ dharamsalas*.

kareva/chader dalna: a custom of remarriage

katha : homily; oral commentary on sacred scriptures; narrating of pious anecdotes.

khanda : double edge sword

kharas : bullock driven mill

kharku : militant

lambardar : the cultivator who, either on his account, or as representative of other members of the village, pays the government dues.

langar : the kitchen attached to every gurdwara from which food is served to all, regardless of caste or creed

lavan : circumambulating the Guru Granth Sahib (*q.v.*) or a sacred fire as part of a marriage ceremony.

mahant : chief, superior of a monastery or other religious institution, manager and head of a religious centre

maharaj : spiritual/temporal Lord

mala : woolen rosary

mala di varni : a Namdhari ritual

Manmat/ man-mukh: self-oriented; one who follows his own impulses rather than the guidance of the Guru.

mantar : a sacred formula or utterance; a prayer

marhi-maseet : a small structure raised over a spot of cremation.

maryada : code of conduct

masand : administrative deputy acting for the Guru. Inaugurated by Guru Ram Das they served faithfully for some time but later became corrupt and were disestablished by Guru Gobind Singh.

mastana singh : an intoxicated person; used for a Namdhari who was so deeply affected by the singing of hymns that he behaved like an intoxicated person, shouting and moving in frenzy.

mela : a fair, especially a religious festival or fair to which people often come great distances on pilgrimage

morcha : an embrasure; entrenchment for besieging a fort; used metaphorically by the Akalis for their non-violent agitations.

muchalka : confidential report.

naam-karan : a ritual for giving name to the child.

nam : the divine name, a summary term expressing the total being of Akal Purakh (*q.v.*).

nam-simran : the devotional practice of meditating on the divine name.

nihang : free from care; free from worldly concern; a militant Sikh sect.

nirguna : without 'qualities' or attributes, unconditioned

nitnam : the Sikh daily liturgy.

pagri : turban

pakhavaj : a musical instrument.

panj-piaras : the 'Cherished Five' or 'Five Beloved'; the first five Sikhs to be initiated as members of the Khalsa (*q.v.*); five Sikhs in good standing chosen to represent a sangat (*q.v.*).

panth : lit., path. System of religious belief and practice. The form 'Panth' designates the Sikh community

pathi : a scripture reader.

patti a part or portion of a village, generally being the subdivision of a *taraf*; a share in a village

patwari : the village accountant.

pir : teacher of the Sufi path or a popular miracle saint

poorbias : Hindustani sepoys

pothi : volume, tome

pujari : priest

pun-dan : sacred acts of charity

puratan : one of the extant collections of janam-sakhi anecdotes (*q.v.*).

rababee : one who plays on the *rabab*, a kind of violin with three strings.

ragi-jatha : a group of musicians employed to sing in a gurdwara/ dharamsala.

ragi : a singer, particularly of the verses in the Sikh scriptures.

rahit : the code of discipline of the Khalsa

rahit-maryada : a code of discipline of the Khalsa/Sikh/ Namdhari Sikh; also a specific text on this subject.

rahit-namas : a manual of rahit, principals.

reet : custom

Sabad/ shabad : 'word', 'hymn' term used to refer to both to the Word received from God and a hymn contained within the Adi Granth

sadharan path : a reading from the Sikh scriptures.

Sadhu : a person devoted to religious pursuits

sakhi : hagiographic narrative

samagari : material used for performing *havan*

sanatan : ancient, eternal. Used here to refer to the pluralistic and polycentric mode of Sikh tradition.

sangat : assembly, religious congregation

santoor : a musical instrument

sarangi : a stringed instrument

sarbrah : manager of Harminder Sahib appointed by the then Deputy Commission of Amritsar.

sarod : a musical instrument

Satguru : a true lord; term used by the Namdhari Sikhs for their spiritual lord.

Satjug : the 'Age of Truth, the first and best of the cosmic eras which follows the Kaliyuga in the cosmic cycle.

Satsang : true association; singing hymns in praise of God in congregation.

sehajdhari : a Sikh who does not observe Khalsa conventions.

shaheedi : martyrdom

shaheed : martyr

sharaa : Islamic law

shashtri sangeet : classical music

shivdavara : a temple of Shiva

siana : a wise person/ a medicine practitioner

simran : meditating on the divine name.

siropa : literally, from head to foot; a dress of honour

suba : a province or primary division of an empire

takhat : 'throne' one of the five major seats of authority among Sikhs. The takhats are located at Amritsar, Anandpur, Damdama (all in the Punjab), Patna (in Bihar), and Nander (in Maharastra).

tankhayia : a transgressor against the Rahit

tap-asthan : a place for meditation

teesra panth : third Panth

thagi : cheating

thanedar : incharge of a police-station

vak : 'saying'; a passage from the Guru Granth Sahib (*q.v.*) chosen at random. Cf. *hukam* (*q.v.*).

varna : lit., colour; one of the four classical groups into which castes are organized

varni : a Namdhari ritual

var : a poetic form; an *Adi Granth* arrangement consisting of stanzas with preceding *shaloks*.

vatta-satta : a practice of exchanging girls in marriage

veds : the sacred literature considered to be revealed.

zamindar : a land lord, proprietor or an occupant of land.

zat : endogamous caste grouping

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CHAPTER—I
FOUNDING THE NAMDHARI MISSION

Theologically speaking, the origin of the Namdhari mission can be located in the Sikh tradition of *nam-simran* which emphasizes on the meditation on the name of God. *Nam-simran* liberates a man from his mundane attachments and transcends him to the spiritual plane. The concept of *nam-simran* rejects all forms of ritualism and exhorts the man to worship God alone. The founder of this mission, Namdhari Guru Balak Singh (1785-1862) established his own centre of propagation at Hazro, District Attock. Since then his successors carry on this tradition of *nam-simran.* However, Namdhari Guru Ram Singh extended the scope of the Namdhari mission in terms of revival of the Khalsa traditions. He received these traditions from the *rahit-namas* of 18th and 19th centuries. He rested his spiritual mission on the *Adi-Granth* and *Dasam Granth*. For the socio-political mission, he referred to the *Prem Sumarag* and *Sakhi* literature.[1]

The following *rahit-namas* are important for the understanding of the Namdhari *maryada*: *Tanakhah Nama, Prahilad Rai Rahit-Nama, Sakhi Rahit Ki, Chaupa Singh Rahit-Nama, Desa Singh Rahit Nama* and *Daya Singh Rahit–Nama.* There are some attributes of the Namdhari *maryada* which can be located in all these texts including *Sau-Sakhi* and *Prem-Sumarag.*[2] There are, however, some basic differences among the scholars in regard to the authorship and dates of these *rahit-namas* as well as the interpretation of some of the terms and concepts used in them. Nevertheless, to appreciate and contextualize the attributes of Namdhari *maryada* of 19th century a summary of main attributes of these *rahit-namas* is essential.

Before we take up this summary, it is necessary to state in the beginning that the main attributes of *rahit-maryada* of these

rahit-namas have taken from the published *rahit-namas*. Besides, the text of the Namdhari *maryada* has also been constructed on the basis of the published letters of Namdhari Guru Ram Singh.[3] The comments or observations of the contemporary scholars and official reports, and of recent scholars are taken as supplementary information. There are some basic limitations regarding the scope and nature of these letters known as *chithian* or *ardasan*. First and foremost is that all the letters which Namdhari Guru Ram Singh (in exile) wanted to pass on to his followers were not preserved lest they could be intercepted by the police. For fear of leaking information to the police or retribution, the followers destroyed these letters. Secondly, only edited, not original version of these letters is available. There is every possibility of missing some of the basic attributes of his mission.

Main attributes of all these *rahit-namas* are as follow: all *rahit-namas* enjoin that a Sikh should get up early in the morning, take his bath and, recite *Japu and Jap* and to see the Guru in the *sangat*. The Sikh should attend the evening service and listen *Rahiras* and *Kirtan Sohila*. The *rahit-namas* reiterate faith in Guru and *Guru Granth* and enjoin upon the Sikh to lead a household life. They ask the followers to express love and compassion to the fellow Sikhs and help to the needy persons. They emphasize that the Sikhs should treat all women other than their wives, their daughters, sisters and mothers. Some of the stipulations of a section of these *rahit-namas* is devoted to Sikh women: they should not bathe naked; ensure personal hygiene and cleanliness while cooking or serving; cover their heads while in *sangat*; learn to read *Granth Sahib* but must not read it in public; shun unclean songs and jokes. Above all, they should maintain modesty and chastity. The *rahit-namas* lay stress particularly on a Sikh to receive the rites of the Khalsa by ceremony of the double-edged sword; should devote himself to the *bani* and refrain from back biting and slander; use *Vahiguruji ki Fateh* as the form of salutation and greeting; must maintain the five symbols of the Khalsa; should

make pilgrimage to the Sikh holy places; should serve only the Khalsa or should engage in agriculture, trade or workshop.[4]

The *rahit-namas* also deal with those injunctions which attract a religious penalty, *tankhah* in Sikh terminology. A Sikh who becomes liable *to tankhah* who ignores *nam, dan* and *isnan* (glorification of God's name, charity and holy bath); who joins not regularly the *satsang* or holy fellowship; who allows his mind to wander while sitting among the company of the holy; who expresses hatred for a poor member of the community; who does not bow to the *sabad;* who is selfish and greedy while distributing *karah prasad* or the holy communion; who puts on the ruler's Turkish turban; who touches a sword with the toe; who dons red apparel; who uses tobacco-snuff; who looks lasciviously upon the womenfolk; who is easily enraged; who gives a daughter or sister in marriage for money; who wears not the sword; who deprives a helpless person of his money or belongings; who pays not the *dasvandh* or tithe: who bathes not in cold water; who eats supper without reciting the *Rahiras ;* who goes to sleep at night without reciting the *Kirtan Sohila*, who stands not by his word; who combs not his hair twice daily; who ties not his turban afresh everyday; who brushes not the teeth regularly; who slanders other; who eats flesh of an animal slaughtered slowly in the Muslim way; who attends performances by dancing girls; who commits adultery; who gives not to the deserving ; who indulges in abuse; who gambles; who earns his livelihood by cheating others; who visits a prostitute. The *rahit-namas* forbid a Sikh to wear a cap or a *janeu,* the sacred thread of a caste Hindu. They forbid association with *masand,* with heretic sect called *Minas*, with those who shave their heads or with those who practise female infanticide. The Sikhs must shun idolatry and the worship of graves. They must have faith only in God, the *Guru Granth Sahib* and the *Guru Khalsa.*[5]

As hinted in the beginning, Namdhari Guru Balak Singh asked his followers to meditate on the name of God all the times and perform no ritual other than repeating God's name. He asked

his followers that they should offer *prasad* of rupee one and four *annas* in the name of God. He instructed his followers to take bath twice a day and to keep one small symbol of sword in the *pagri;* to earn livelihood by their own efforts and hard work and to eat food cooked only by the *Gursikh.* They were to follow ethics in their day-to-day life and avoid indulgences. He prohibited the use of meat, tobacco and liquor. The founder of Namdhari mission also started *anand riti.*[6]

The impact of his mission was evidently considerable. As per Namdhari tradition, he administered *gur-mantar* to Ram Singh and appointed his successor in one of the gatherings held at Hazro. However, this version has been contested by the official account which states that there were three claimants namely Lal Singh, Kahn Singh and Ram Singh. According to the official version, Lal Singh stayed back at Hazro whereas Kahn Singh and Ram Singh shifted to Amritsar and village Bhaini Ararian respectively.[7]

Ram Singh was born at village Bhaini Ararian in Ludhiana District in 1816. He was son of Baba Jassa Singh, Tarkhan by caste. His mother was Sada Kaur.[8] He imbibed the spirit of Sikhism and its tradition from his mother as she narrated the legends of Sikh Gurus and importance of recitation of *gurbani.* She also taught him to read and write Punjabi in the Gurmukhi script.[9] Ram Singh was a handsome boy and physically strong. When he completed twenty first year of his age, he took interest in the rural games. According to the Namdhari literature, Kabul Singh, a relative of Baba Jassa Singh, came to Bhaini and was very much impressed by the physical appearance of Ram Singh and prevailed upon Baba Jassa Singh to get his son admitted in the Khalsa Fauj. Since Kabul Singh himself was Subedar in the Khalsa Fauj, it was on his recommendation that Ram Singh was recruited in Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh Regiment. After sometime, this regiment moved to Hazro where Ram Singh, along with his close friend Kahn Singh, came in contact with Baba Balak Singh. As Ram Singh and Kahn Singh devoted considerable time to the meditation

on the name of God, they began to earn the respect of their colleagues. Eventually, Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh's Regiment came to be known as Bhagtan Wali Regiment. Meanwhile, the Khalsa raj began to collapse quickly after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh as his successors were incapable administrators. The Lahore Darbar witnessed conspiracies and counter–conspiracies engineered by the Dogra Brothers and Sikh Sardars. Eventually, the Khalsa Fauj took over the civil administration and indulged in lawlessness activities. To contain the *Panches* of the Khalsa Fauj, some of the Darbaris including Dogras and Maharani Jindan conspired with the British to attack Khalsa Fauj.[10] It was this disgusting situation in the Lahore Darbar, which compelled Ram Singh to quit his regiment in 1845. He came back to his native village Bhaini. Gaini Gian Singh, a contemporary Nirmala scholar, states that it was after twelve years that Bhai Ram Singh assumed the propagation of teachings of Sikh Gurus and thought to revive the Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh. He gradually began to attract the attention of the people of his own and neighbouring villages as he woke up in the early morning, took bath and recited *gurbani* for hours together and also worked as carpenter and mason.[11] He opened the grocery shop in his own village. The people began to respect his pious and honest living. The Namdhari tradition further states that he began to bring the people in the fold of Sikhism and organized a congregation on the day of Baisakhi of 1857 AD. He administered baptizism to five Sikhs and also unfurled the flag of Sant Khalsa which was triangular in shape and white in colour.[12] Kahn Singh Nihang of village Chak, Malerkotala State; Labh Singh Ragi of Amritsar; Atma Singh of Alo Muhar village, District Sialkot; Bhai Naina Singh Wariyah, Amritsar District and Sudh Singh of village Durgapur, District Jalandhar were first to be initiated. Afterwards several people from the congregation took *amrit*.[13]

The Namdhari Guru, in all probability, got the concept of Sant Khalsa from *Prem Sumarag*. In the beginning of its first Chapter, this *granth* mentions that with *Akal Purakh's* blessings,

the Sant Khalsa would be formed in the age of *Kalyuga*. The *granth* also mentions the date and time of its formation. It further mentions that in the age of *Kalyuga*, a messenger of *Akal Purakh* would appear in the form of human being for destroying the enemies of the Panth and false gurus on the one hand and removing the ignorance of the people and reaffirming their faith in *Akal Purakh* on the other. The Sant Khalsa would usher an era of *Satjug*.[14]

Being inspired by the *Prem Sumarag*, Namdhari Guru Ram Singh reiterated time and again that he was only an instrument in the hands of Guru Gobind Singh in reviving the Sant Khalsa. He believed that Guru Gobind Singh was actually the founder of this Khalsa. Since the Sant Khalsa was Guru's creation, it was going to be ever lasting creation. Namdhari Guru Ram Singh further believed that God's creation could not be demolished by the human beings. It was precisely for this reason that he was not afraid of the then rulers and their allies: Sardars and priests who wanted to demolish Sant Khalsa. However, Namdhari Guru cited another reason for which Sant Khalsa was brought into being. He contested that in his contemporary society there were neither true Sikhs nor the Khalsa as perceived by the Sikh Gurus. The latter expected that the Sikhs would meditate on the name of God and the Khalsa would strive for those values which were cherished by Guru Gobind Singh himself. It was for this reason that the Sikh Gurus compiled *Granth Sahib* and bequeathed it to the Sikhs. Moreover, they also expected that the Sikhs should perform *bhog*. By *bhog*, Namdhari Guru implied that it was obligatory for the true Sikhs to read *bani* and meditate on the name of God.[15] Nevertheless, it was regrettable for the Namdhari spiritual master to note that the contemporary Sikhs particularly the well off Sikhs and *mahants* and *pujaris* and *gyanis* had abdicated such obligations of a true Sikh. They had gone astray from the spiritual path. It was left to the Namdhari Sikhs alone to observe the tradition of *nam-simran*. He regretted that the latter were declared *tankhayias* by such custodians of

Sikhism. For Namdhari Guru it was an ironical situation.

Similar was the position of custodians of *devidvaras, shivdvaras* and *mandirs* who were parasites. The British officials noted that the Namdharis popularly called Kukas did not show any respect to the priestly class and treated the religious places as the means of extortion and to be held in contempt and never to be visited. The idols and idol worship were insult to God and will not be forgiven.[16] Meanwhile, a large number of reports began to pour in at the police headquarters that the Kukas had started desecrating and demolishing the sacred places of the Hindus and Muslims alike. One of such sacred places of Hindus was located between the village of Chuhar Bhaini and Chote Borshu in District Ferozepur. The Kuka zealots Waryam Singh, Fateh Singh and Jaimal Singh destroyed this place on 1 September 1866.[17] Similarly, the Kukas destroyed twenty seven graves, located at village Khatri Kose. It was reported that four Mazhabi Kukas destroyed these graves. When these Kukas were destroying these graves, the villagers protested and resisted Kukas' action. As a result, violent clashes took place injuring relatives and friends to whom these graves belonged.[18] The British Government was alarmed of such incidents and arrested those Kukas who were involved in the destruction of these marks. The Kukas were put on trial and awarded with various punishments. It seems that Kukas' intention was to eliminate fear and superstitions prevalent among the common people. They wanted to tell the rural population that there were no supernatural power which could harm them.[19] The incident of destruction of graves and tombs in the day light projected the heroic image of the Kukas. The Kukas also conveyed the message to the people that worship of graves and tombs was futile and useless. Nevertheless, these acts were fraught with dangerous implications. The Namdhari Guru was aware about the reaction of the people whose traditional sentiments could be hurt by such action of his followers. He was also aware about the retribution of the British Government. The latter could hold him responsible for such acts of violence and could

take legal action. In those times, the Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus often worshiped such sites of graves and tombs. The Namdhari Guru did not want to invite the hostility of these people. On the other hand the British perceived such acts in terms of law and order problem. They were determined to maintain peace and order at every cost.[20]

The Namdhari Guru undertook intensive tours of sacred places of the Sikhs located at Amritsar, Anandpur and Mukatsar. He chose occasions of Baisakhi, Diwali, Maghi and Holi for visiting these holy places. He was accompanied by his *Subas* and local leaders and devotees. It was on the day of Baisakhi in 1863 that he came to pay his obeisance to Darbar Sahib, Amritsar. Among his followers there were a large number of sturdy youngmen who had sticks in their hands. After Amritsar, Namdhari Guru went to Kapurthala and then Ferozepur District. He stayed at a village Khote in this district. By this time, nearly four to five hundred followers had assembled at this village. He organized a congregation there and performed marriages according to *anand-riti*. Since *anand-riti* did not require performance of any other ritual excepting four *lavan* from the *Guru Granth*, the priest (*Brahmin*) of this village and his counterparts in the other villages felt a threat to their occupation. He apprehended that rest of the Sikhs would too emulate the *anand-riti*. The Brahmin was a Sanatanist who immediately informed to the police station about Namdhari Guru's innovation in the traditional rituals and customs. He also alleged that the Namdhari Guru and his followers were behaving in a rebellious manner. The Police Sergeant made an enquiry into their activities and found that there was a truth in the allegation. Taking immediate action, the Deputy Commissioner of Ludhiana ordered that the Namdhari Guru should be sent to his native village and be placed under strict surveillance which lasted from 1863 to 1867.[21]

During the period of surveillance, the British could not find anything objectionable. Meanwhile, the Namdhari Guru expressed his desire to pay homage at Anandpur in 1867. Lakha Singh, a

wealthy *zamindar* of village Bhaini, assured the British officials that his spiritual master would stay at Anandpur only for a day and will not do anything which could embarrass the government. Thus the Namdhari Guru was granted permission to visit to Anandpur and attend the *hola* festival there. Namdhari Guru proceeded to Anandpur riding on his pet 'Chini' horse. He was accompanied by some *Subas* who too rode their own horses.[22] About fifty *Kukas* were on the horses. They were followed by a large number of followers who were on foot. Suba Sahib Singh was incharge of this procession.[23] By the time Namdhari Guru reached Anandpur, his followers put up tents and made arrangements for his stay. When Namdhari Guru wished to pay homage to the gurdwaras, the *mahants* and *pujaris* raised objections regarding the practice of *sutra* by the *Kukas* and wanted assurance that they would not take off their turbans and let loose their hair in the premises of gurdwaras. The Namdhari Guru agreed to comply with these conditions in the presence of Police officials. He paid homage to Kesgarh Sahib and Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib Gurdwaras on 20th March 1867. He gave an offering of Rupees twenty-five at each place. He felt offended when the *pujaris* of the Kesgarh Sahib Gurdwara refused to pray for him. However, he was happy with the conduct of *pujaris* of Guru Tegh Bahadur Gurdwara and paid them extra rupees for his favour.[24]

Although Namdhari Guru's visit to the historic gurdwaras of Anandpur Sahib passed off peacefully yet it brought the basic religious differences between the Kukas and the priestly class to the forefront. On reaching back to his headquarters, the Namdhari Guru wrote a letter to the priests of Gurdwara Kesgarh Sahib. He enquired from the priests the reason for which he was denied to be called *Gurmukh*. The priests argued that (a) he set himself as a Guru, (b) he whispered a *mantar* in the ear of a convert whereas practice was to administer *amrit*, (c) he made a convert to repeat *Janam Guru Hazro Aur Basi Guru Bhaini* whereas the actual practice was that *Janam Guru Patna Aur Basi Guru Anandpur*

and (d) Kukas' turbans fell off on their shoulders in the state of frenzy in the presence of *Guru Granth Sahib*. It was a Sufi not Sikh practice. The Namdhari Guru reacted to these charges saying that the *pujaris* failed to appreciate his religious reforms and counter charged them for their indulgences like drinking, lying, and female infanticide etc. He further alleged that the priestly class was creating rifts in the *Panth* itself. He reiterated that he was a servant of God and revived the *maryada* of tenth Guru. He told the priestly class that it was he who inspired hundreds of people to read and recite *gurbani*.[25]

The Namdhari Guru could see the reason for which the wealthy and priestly classes were opposed to his followers. He noted that right from Guru period onward there had been a contradiction between the rich and poor people. The latter aspired for the spiritual quest. On the other hand the rich always perceived a threat from the poor for their existence. He quoted Guru Nanak's verse in this context. If his contemporary rich people opposed the Namdhari Sikhs, it was not a surprise. They were the cursed people. Crying foul was their habit.[26]

He used the term *dhanaad* (wealthy) for the rulers comprising British and landed aristocracy. The latter submitted a memorandum to the then Lieutenant Governor, Punjab and extended their full support to the British and asked the latter to crush the wicked sect of the Kukas. However, he noted that this ruling class did not appreciate his claim that the Namdhari Sikhs were Guru Gobind Singh's creation. If the Namdhari Sikhs had made successful strives, it was due to Guru's grace. In contrast to the behavior of the rulers, the Namdhari Sikhs alone performed *akhand paths* and meditated on the name of God.[27]

In exile, the Namdhari Guru knew that the founders of the Singh Sabha movement were wealthy and influential people. He came to think that these founders established the Singh Sabhas in reaction to his own organization. He noted that the wealthy and

priestly classes thought that if poor Kukas could be successful in their mission why couldn't they be particularly when they had the resources. However, Namdhari Guru Ram Singh believed that without God's grace nobody could think of a success. The Singh Sabha leaders, according to him, did not enjoy that grace. He was confident that so long the Namdhari Sikhs, existed the Singh Sabhias wouldn't make progress. For him, the Namdhari Sikhs personified fire and it was dangerous to play with the fire.[28] It may be mentioned here that by the time Kukas posed a serious threat to their raj, the British had brought up a powerful class of its allies into being. These allies comprised notable families of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's times and traditional religious leaders known as *Sants* and *Babas* and *Pirs*. Among the notable Sikh families were Majithia, Ahluwalia and Ramgarhia. The powerful traditional religious leaders were Baba Khem Singh Bedi in Rawalpindi and Bhai Arjan Singh Bagarian in Malwa region.[29] Similarly, *mahants* and *pujaris* controlled and managed the important historical gurdwaras and prospered on the landed property attached to these gurdwaras. The British had established their stranglehold over the landed aristocracy as well as priestly classes. The former were enrolled as the members of Darbar of Lt Governor and Viceroy; made them Extra Assistant Commissioners and Honorary Magistrates. They were rewarded with *jagris*, pensions and letters of appreciation for rendering loyal services to the raj. Those who were in financial crisis, their estates were looked after by the Government itself. Similarly, the priestly classes were also patronized by the British in terms of assigning land-squares and rewards. *Mahants* and *pujaris* were allowed to register the gurdwara landed property against their names. Moreover, the *mahants* and *pujaris* of Darbar Sahib, Amritsar were put under *Sarbrah* who was nominated by the Government and accountable to the Deputy Commissioner only.[30] When Namdhari Guru Ram Singh was taunting the *pujaris* that they had the support of big people he was referring to this development. He was conscious of the fact that his adversaries

had the potential to destroy Namdhari mission. He apprehended that the success of Singh Sabha leaders depended upon the marginalization of the Namdhari Sikhs.

The Namdhari Guru questioned the authority of the priestly class for issuing edicts against him and the Kukas, declaring them *tankhayias,* the transgressors against the *rahit.* He believed that since Namdhari Sikhs were Guru's creation, the priests issued edicts against the Guru himself. He thought that the priests had committed *manmat.* At the same time, he told the *pujaris* that if they thought that the Kukas were just Ram Singh's creation they had the right to vanquish the Kukas. He knew that the Kukas were small fry in the face of might of the *pujaris* as they occupied the seat of temporal power, the Akal Bunga and enjoyed the backing of powerful Sikh ruling class.[31]

He reminded the *pujaris* that they had already done considerable damage to his Kukas. He told them that it was the turn of the *pujaris* and their supporters to face the consequences as he expected an upheaval in the Punjab. He further told the *pujaris* that he defied their authority and they should take his stand seriously. The Namdhari Guru asked the *pujaris* of the Akal Bunga that they should circulate his letter among the rest of the *pujaris* of other *takhats* and their supporters. He refused to tender his apology to these *pujaris* unless the latter could prove the falsehood of the Kukas.[32]

The Namdhari Guru told the *pujaris* of the Akal Bunga and of the other *takhats* that if he did not ask them to accept the Namdhari Sikhs as Guru's creation earlier because he thought that they (*pujaris*) would themselves see the truth. But he found that they suffered from mypoia and failed to distinct truth from falsehood. It was for this reason that they refused to perform *ardas* on Kukas's behalf. Moreover, they and their supporters insulted and roughed up the Kukas when the latter dared to question the authority of the *pujaris*. The *pujaris* told the Kukas that they acted according to the instructions issued by the head priest of the

Akal Bunga. The Namdhari Guru asked the *pujaris* that they should not act against the Kukas in hurry because only devils acted in that manner.[33]

Namdhari Guru Ram Singh pleaded with the *pujaris* that they should revise their opinion about the Kukas and agree that the *Kuka Panth* was Guru's Panth and that the Kukas were carrying on Guru's mission. He told the *pujaris* that the Kukas believed in *Guru Granth* as well as *Dasam Granth*. Moreover, the Kukas also believed that the Sikh was that person who had faith in *Guru Sabad* and any person who did not believe in *Guru Sabad* could not be called a Sikh. It was the grace of *Guru Sabad* which bestowed anything on a person.[34]

In another letter, he told the congregation that the true Guru and he himself would appear in country as ninety-seven years had elapsed. For the Namdhari Sikhs, it was Lahore, the headquarters of the British and its allies, from where the tyranny had been unleashed. The Namdhari Guru thought that if Guru willed an upheaval was going to take place.[35] Through his Suba Gurcharan Singh, the Namdhari Guru was keen to know the political situation in the District Peshawar. He expected that Russia was going to move towards Kabul and asked his followers to intimate these advances to him. As we know that the Namdhari Sikhs were trying to build up rapport with the Russian Government. Suba Bishan Singh and Suba Gurcharan Singh made trips to Russia and gave their Guru's letter to the Russian authorities. His letter referred to a massive Kuka following (more than three Lakhs !!!) which was ready to rebel against the British. The letter also carried out the political prophecies of the Namdhari Guru and pleaded with Russian authorities to help the Kukas and invade India. The Kuka activists were in touch with Maharaja Dalip Singh who wished to come to Punjab. It was rumoured that the Namdhari Guru's spirit had entered into Dalip Singh. The Kukas reached Bombay to greet him.[36]

Namdhari Guru Ram Singh was seriously concerned about the sagging morale of his followers in the wake of disinformation campaign launched by the Sikh landed gentry and priestly class. Through their memorandum and public utterances, these people tried to convince the British that the Kukas were aspiring to usurp the British raj. They would do the same thing to the British what Sikhs did to the Chaghtais in terms of dislodging the latter from power in earlier times. Tactically, the Namdhari Guru denied such intentions. For him both landed gentry and priestly class did injustice to the Kukas. So much so, the *pujaris* of the Akal Bunga issued edict in this regard without any reason. The Namdhari Guru regretted that these allies prevailed upon the British that his presence in Punjab could endanger the raj and it was in the interest of the raj that the Namdhari Guru should be sent to a far away place.[37]

In the hour of crisis, the Namdhari Guru told his followers to take refuge in the *nam-simran* and asked them to perform *akhand paths* collectively and meditate on the name of God vigorously. He knew that the recitation of the *gurbani* would not only inspire his followers but also to keep them together in his absence. It may be pointed out here that the Kukas were not allowed to sing *sabad* nor could they perform *akhand paths* publically. The agents of the raj threatened the Kukas of the dire consequences if they observed these practices. In this situation, their spiritual master told them to perform *paths* and *nam simran* secretly. He asked his followers to observe *rahit* and avoid the company of *man-mukh* who had deviated from the path of *nam-simran.*[38] His concern was to prepare his followers to face the hard time boldly. This he did by keeping alive their hope that ultimately the Sant Khalsa would survive. He told his followers that the time was not far off for the end of adversaries of the Namdhari Sikhs. He believed that by the grace of God, hard time would soon be over.

The Namdhari Guru revived that *rahit-maryada* whose main attributes are to be found in *Guru Granth, Dasam Granth,*

Prem Sumarag and *Sau-Sakhis*. To begin with the *Prem Sumarag*, its literal meaning is true way to love. It is an anonymous work in old Punjabi evoking a Sikh way of life and Sikh society. Written probably in early eighteenth century, it is a kind of *rahitnama* attempting to prescribe norms of behaviour, religious as well as social, private as well as public for the members of the Khalsa Panth. It also provides a comprehensive model of the Sikh polity with details of civil and military administration.[39] Comparison of the contents of chapters of *Prem Sumarag* with Namdhari Guru Ram Singh's letters suggests that the latter was inspired to understand Guru Gobind Singh's objective for founding the Khalsa Panth. The degenerated condition of the Khalsa and Khalsa Fauj of Lahore Kingdom prompted the Namdhari Guru to revive Guru Gobind Singh's true Khalsa to face the onslaughts unleashed by those Sikhs who were inimical to the Sikh way of life and Khalsa raj. As noted in the proceeding paras, the Namdhari Guru was inspired by the *Prem Sumarag* for founding the Sant Khalsa and evolving its maryada. From *Prem Sumarag*, he came to realize that it was obligatory for a true Sikh to expunge evil and promote virtue. *Prem Sumarag* further laid down the following daily routine for a Sikh:

> 1) getting up early in the morning, taking a bath, reciting *Japu* and *Jap* five times in the morning, *Japu* and *Jap* at noon, *Sodar, Japu*, and *Jap* in the evening and readings from the *Bachitra Natak* and *Kirtan Sohila* before going to bed. The stress is on constant remembrance of God, on honest work, mutual help and love. 2) A Sikh must shun flirtation and adultery, greed, anger, theft, egocentricity, speaking ill of others, falsehood and even truth that harms others, he must always keep the arms by his side, work for his living, be hospitable, address fellow Sikh as "Singh Ji" and resign himself, in all situations, to the will of the Almighty. The book also lays down the method of Khalsa initiation and principles of social behaviour, 3) rituals to be observed at child birth, 4) rules regarding the selection of life-partners,

the age for marriage, permitting a widow to remarry, 5) the kind of food a Sikh should partake of and the kind especially intoxicants that he must avoid; laying special emphasis on cleanliness, 6) the dress and ornaments a Sikh should wear, the occupations he should pursue and those he must forbear from, 7) Truth telling is prized most. He who renders false witnesses sins. Even kings cannot claim exemption from these moral norms.[40]

Yet Namdhari Guru's maryada was not proto of *Prem Sumarag's rahit*. There are several attributes of this granth's *rahit* which Namdhari Guru did not accept in their totality.[41] Besides, *Prem Sumarag* also enunciates the form of Sikh polity which was essentially a benevolent monarchy vesting absolute power in a king, not in the Panth. However, king occupied a central place taking decision independently and delivering justice. According to *Prem Sumarag*, king owned special considerations to the Khalsa Panth. Punjabi was to be the official language of the state and all Sikh children were to be given instructions in the Khalsa *rahit*. Although the letters of Namdhari Guru did not delve into the realm of Sikh polity yet political activities of the Kukas were directed towards the restoration of the Khalsa raj which was annexed by the British.

Reference to the *Sau Sakhis* in the letters of Namdhari Guru and also by his followers was essentially meant for the realization of the Khalsa raj and mobilization of the Namdhari followers for that concern. The Namdhari followers wrote letters on the basis of the *Sau Sakhis* for imagining their *Satguru* as a personification of Guru Gobind Singh and sought to fulfill political aspirations of the Namdhari Sikhs. It is said that the changes and interpolations were made in the text of the *Sau Sakhis* purportedly written by Bhai Gurbakhash Singh, better known as Bhai Ram Kunwar (1672-1761) and a member of retinue of Guru Gobind Singh. After the annexation, the *Sau Sakhis* were sought by the people as it stood for the establishment of the Sikh sovereignty

under Maharaja Dalip Singh. When Namdhari Guru was exiled to Rangoon in 1872, his followers circulated these *Sakhis* among the people for spreading the idea that their spiritual master would return from the exile and there would be a rise of Muhammadan Chief on the North-West of India. Simultaneously, Russia would invade India with the help of Maharaja Dalip Singh and the Kukas for the over throw of the British rule.[42] As we shall see, Namdhari Guru was well aware about these prophecies and ought to know the situation prevailing in the northwest region of India and Russian advances towards Punjab.

Nevertheless, inspite of his references to the *Prem Sumarag* and *Sau Sakhis* in his letters, the central authority of his *maryada* remain the *Guru Granth.* It is not, therefore, a coincidence that since Namdhari Guru Ram Singh's time, the Namdharis scholars and activists further conceptualize their *rahit-maryada* in *the Adi-Granth* and illustrate it with reference to *bani.* Next to the *Adi-Granth* are *Sakhi* literature and the works of Bhai Gurdas, Bhai Nand Lal and Gaini Gian Singh etc.[43]

On the basis of these writings, the *rahit* reiterated by the Namdhari Guru in his letters was as follow: The Sant Khalsa was to rise in the early morning, brush teeth and to have full bath and wear *kachh.* They were to recite *Panj Granthi or Japu, Jap, Rahiras, Kirtan Sohila, Chandi di Var, Sukhmani and Ughardanti. Nam-simran* was to be done throughout the day whenever a Namdhari Sikh could take rest from his work. He exhorted his followers to memories the *bani* as much as it was possible for a person. If elders were illiterates they were asked to take help from other persons for memorizing *bani.*

For the Namdhari spiritual leader, reading and reciting *gurbani* was important but more important was the *simran,* meditation on the name of God. He explained that reading or reciting scriptures were helpful intellectually but were not helpful in invoking the love for *bani.* It was meditation alone which could

transcend a man from temporal to the spiritual plane. For him, the people engaged in *simran* were not ordinary people. They were eclectics. *Simran* could raise the social status of a man. In this regard, the Namdhari Guru cited his own example. He said that if thousands of people worshiped him as guru it was due to the power of his *nam simran.* Otherwise, he came from an artisan family which was under privileged and socially inferior.[44] The artisans were known or addressed by the derogatory words like *kammi or kamins. Nam-simran* gave him a spiritual strength to face abuses and taunts of his adversaries.

The Namdhari Guru instructed his followers to abstain from meat diet, tobacco, snuff and alcohol. Regarding meat eating, he quoted Guru Nanak who said that only that person could eat meat who had powers to bestow life on the animal which was to be killed for meat. He also quoted Kabir's verse objecting animal slaughtering. The Namdhari Guru believed that human beings were not ordained carnivores by God. Similarly, he argued that the consumption of liquor deadened human sensibilities and revived animal instincts. He believed that only *malechh* ate meat and consumed liquor. For him, *malechh* were Muslims. Moreover, he also equated *dark blue* dress with the *malechh.* For him wearing this dress by the *Nihangs* was the symbol of aggressive behaviour. Namdhari spiritual master himself experienced bitter behaviour at the hands of a *Nihang* who threatened to kill him.[45]

If there was anything which Namdhari Guru abhorred strongly it was beef eating. Those who, whether Sikhs or Hindus, took it, shall perish. They ceased to be Sikhs or Hindus. Dalip Singh ceased to be Sikh as he ate beef. It seems that for Namdhari Guru slaughtering cows and beef eating were both crime and sin. He believed that one of the major obligations of Sant Khalsa was to protect to cow and helpless people. The Sant Khalsa carried on these obligations to their logical end when they attacked butchers in Amritsar, Raikot and Malerkotla. Nevertheless, the Namdhari Guru underlined the relevance of cow in the agrarian economy. He

was of the opinion that slaughtering of cows would adversely affect the health of the poor people. They would neither get milk nor bulls for agriculture.

The Namdhari Guru disliked parasites and asked his followers to earn their livelihood. He gave instructions to the people living at Bhaini Sahib that they should not spend their time in an idle way. He also wished that each follower should become self-dependent. At the same time, the followers should take care of the needy people. No hungry man, irrespective of his religious affiliations, should leave *dera* (Bhaini Sahib) without having food and clothes. The Namdhari Guru believed that *pun-dan* (sacred act and charity) lead to the state of spiritual joy and bliss. Besides, he exhorted his followers that they shouldn't appropriate somebody else's property. Stealing was both crime and sin. Similarly, he asked his followers to pay back the debts if they had incurred. For him, withholding debt was bigger crime than *thagi*. In fact, he was aware about the implications of the petty evils which could wreck the life of a common man. Stealing or appropriating property or withholding debt could result into the litigation. Increasing volume of litigation was a trap in which a very large number of marginalized peasantry was falling into in the second half of 19th century. Litigation was essentially the by-product of the British legal structure. When Namdhari Guru was exiled, symptoms of mal-functioning of this structure had begun to appear in the agrarian society of Punjab.[46]

Liberating women from the social degradation was serious issue for the Namdhari Guru. There were several rituals and customs and practices which forced the women to lead a subhuman life. The practices of selling or exchanging women were accepted ethos of the Punjabi rural society in nineteenth century. During this period, most of the girls were stolen from sub-mountain region and sold in the villages and towns of Punjab. M.L. Darling, Revenue Commissioner and author of works on agrarian society and economy, citied one such incident. In Amritsar, a Jat bought a widow and daughter for Rs. 600. He sold the daughter, who was in teens, for

Rs. 1200 and six month later got Rs. 300 for the widow, clearing for Rs. 900 in all.[47] According to Darling this trafficking in women persisted well into the twentieth century and became lucrative money making scheme for the Punjabis. In a country where the village women were regarded as little better than a chattel, the purchase of bride was inevitable. There was another widely accepted social practice of bartering away girls in many districts of Punjab. The practice was known as *vatta-satta*. Both practices of exchanging and selling girls for consummating marriage showed a deeper socio-economic malady in which the people were caught up. Consummating a marriage was a costly affair and beyond the reach of poor peasants which constituted a major segment of the agrarian society. Price of a bride varied from Rs. 50 to Rs. 500/600 in late 19th century. This price index multiplied to Rs. 2000 to Rs. 4000 in early 20th century.

As a result, the peasants had to sell their livestock for consummating the marriage of their daughters. In most of the cases, they took loans from money-lenders which often resulted into indebtedness. Rising cost of marriages (due to shortage of girls) and fear of fragmentation of landholdings were some of the factors which, as reported in District Gazetteers, led to a practice among the Jat and Rajput families to keep one or two men singles. It also led to an unethical practice of sharing a wife by two or three brothers. Sometime, a man will emigrate and hand over his wife to a brother till he returned. In such families, laxity was bound to rise and singles became targets of ridicules as reflected in the folk culture. Moreover, shortage of girls and costly marriages also encouraged the practice of exchanging daughter or niece for a bride. Such unethical practices were bound to continue as women were required to rear sons and perform domestic chores and work in agriculture fields.

The District Gazetteers recorded some incidents wherein a Jat agriculturist would go all out for marrying any women he could get hold. These were such compulsions which often gave rise to unethical practices and incurring debts.[48]

Since Namdhari Guru's followers came mainly from the agrarian society, he addressed to these social maladies and gave a practical solution. Long before, he was exiled he launched a tirade against these practices. The birth of a girl was considered ill omen, particularly by the Sikhs of high-castes: Khatris, Aroras, Bedis and Sodhis. The girl-infants, if survived, were neither groomed nor educated properly. They were often subjected to mental and physical tortures and were married below the age of puberty. Addressing to the magnitude of this problem, the Namdhari Guru exhorted his followers to stop committing infanticide and selling daughters in marriage. For him, these practices were bigger crime and sin than cow killing. He had sound reason for stopping these practices. He told his followers that the daughters were fountain head of warm and affection. The practice of bartering or selling daughters often resulted into the sufferings of daughters. They lost peace and honour in the family. Sometime, girls sold in marriage were further sold by in–laws for pecuniary considerations. Such practices gave rise to the immorality. Moreover, parents suffered humiliations which wrecked their social life.[49]

The Namdhari Guru told his Khalsa that those who indulged in such practices they must not be allowed to participate in the congregation; nothing should be accepted from their hands and the Khalsa should not visit their houses. The Khalsa should boycott such people. For uprooting these practices, the Namdhari Guru came up with the solutions: girls should be taught skills of reading and writing; they should be well versed in *gurbani* which would make them spiritually stronger. He further ordered that if you had a daughter marry her while she was young and send her to the house of father-in-law. He knew that a higher age could reduce the chances of marriages and the longer the stay of young daughters in parents' houses they could become a bigger source of embarrassment for their parents.[50]

The Namdhari Guru was extremely worried about the implications of prostitution and homosexuality in which the custodians

of the Khalsa were trapped into. Maharaja Ranjit Singh, his successors and Darbaris themselves compromised with those moral and ethical values for which the Khalsa was appreciated even by its adversaries during 18th century.[51] Subsequently, the Khalsa fauj, which marginalized the civil authority of the Kingdom of Lahore, indulged in lawlessness. The Namdhari Guru himself witnessed this moral depravity and fratricidal killings. It was painful for him to see that so- called custodians of the Khalsa raj did not refrain from liquidating the revered leaders like Bhai Bir Singh of Naurangabad. Namdhari Guru Ram Singh held him in great esteem. It was the lawlessness of the Khalsa fauj and of Dogra brothers which accelerated the process of collapse of this raj. It was this disgusting situation which forced Namdhari Guru to quit the service of the Khalsa fauj. After the annexation of the Khalsa raj there were a few veterans of this raj who refused to accept the British raj and carried on the torch of the freedom. Among them was Bhai Maharaj Singh, who was Bhai Bir Singh's follower. Nevertheless, they were opposed and despised by the Sikh Sardars, *mahants* and *pujaris* whose vested interests synchronized with the raj.

The menace of moral depravity assumed dangerous proportions under the British rule. Some of the European civil and military personnel were singles and those who were married, did not bring their wives and children from England to the places where they were posted. The servants, maid servants and prostitutes satisfied sexual desires of these personnel. The life of military personnel was more lax than the civil officials. "According to an early nineteenth century document, Ludhiana had the reputation of furnishing women to all the British regiments stationed there. In a population not more than 20,000 there were 3,000 prostitutes. It implies that half the female population was engaged in this occupation. Although many of these girls were stolen and bought from the surrounding hill country yet some of them were bartered as well."[52]

The Namdhari Guru censured the indulgence of one of his followers who stayed with a prostitute. He reprimanded this follower saying that since he was married there was no urgency for him to indulge in. The Namdhari Guru acquainted him with the dangerous effects of such indulgence. Apart from financial loss and loss of honour, he pointed out that since majority of the visitors to these prostitutes happened to be the Muslims, there was every possibility of interaction with them which could ultimately convert a Sikh into Muslim. The Namdhari Guru was of the opinion that any person having interaction with Muslim prostitute was going to loose his religion. This way many Hindus suffered.[53]

Most pitiable condition was of the widows as she was neither accepted by her parents nor in-laws. Her very presence was considered ill-omen. Although the custom of *kareva/chader dalna* gave some of them an opportunity to rehabilitate themselves yet they did not enjoy a respectable position in the family and community as this custom was guided by the economic considerations. For instance, in the agrarian society, the brother of deceased husband remarried widow to keep the landholding of the family intact. If the widow had sons from the previous husband, as per custom, she could claim a share in the family landed property. However, the widows were treated with contempt and were not given due regards on social occasions. The position of widows was usually determined by the type of support which they could get from their parents. Namdhari Guru's response to this problem was moderate. He simply said that 'if a widow of Kuka wanted to marry she could marry again a Kuka. The official accounts confirm that Namdharis 'enjoin (ed) the marriage of widows'.[54]

The Namdhari Guru came to think that the prevalent marriage rituals were impediments in liberating the women and checking moral depravity. He was conscious of the problems of poor people who could not afford expensive marriage rituals and customs. As a result, a large number of male members of the

agrarian society remained unmarried. Moreover, he was also conscious of the fact that most of these customs and rituals were anti-Sikhism. He revived the *gurmat* tradition of *anand riti*. The Namdhari Guru asked his followers to solemnize marriage according to this *riti* in a simple way avoiding all kinds of expenses. He also forbade the dowry practice. He himself solemnized the *anand* marriages on a large scale. He launched this programme in the first week of June 1863 in the village of Khote in Ferozepur District. On this occasion, a carpenter's daughter was married to the son of the Arora family so that the caste feeling may be eschewed. Subsequently, several such marriages were performed for the same concern. He evolved a following structure of *anand riti*:

> On the fixed day of a marriage, early in the morning after performing *kirtan* of *Asa di War*, *havan* is started under a *vedi* and the *bani* of *Japu, Jaap, Chandi Charitar,* and *Akal Ustat* are recited. Four *lawan* (hymns) from *Adi-Granth* are read and couple circumscribe around the *havan*. Bride does not cover her face, a break from the *parda* practice. The expenditure on marriage comprised Rs. 1.25 paise for tying the knot of the cloth of bride and bride groom, and Rs. 2.50 paise for *karah parsad*. He forbade his followers to spend more than Rs. 13/- at a wedding.[55]

> To obliterate discrimination between man and woman and bring the latter as par with former in temporal and spiritual matters, the Namdhari Guru administered *amrit* to the women too. They were permitted to keep *rahit* of the Sant Khalsa. They were also allowed to take part in the religious gatherings and rituals. Moreover, they were given administrative responsibility. Prominent among these women were Bibi Khemi of village Siaher in District Ludhiana and Bibi Hukmi. The successors of Namdhari Guru Ram Singh further strengthened the equal status of women to men when they made obligatory for the proposed brides to take *amrit* along with bridegrooms before performing *anand-riti*. Subsequently, the Namdhari Gurus continued the tradition of associating Namdhari women with the administrative and socio-cultural activities of the Namdhari community.

The Namdhari Guru did not see marriage merely in terms of sexual gratification. For him it was an institution of procreation for the continuity of social order. The practice of remaining single not only defied social obligation of procreation but also resulted into immorality. As noted earlier, Namdhari Guru Ram Singh denounced this practice. His inexpensive and simple *anand-riti* paved a way for legitimate relations between men and women.

The Namdhari Guru advised his followers not to cry and weep at the death of their relatives or friends because death occurred according to the will of God. Mourning was against the will of God. Mourning and crying not only harmed the living beings but it troubled the deported soul also. However, the Namdhari Guru advised his followers to give alms and clothes and food, and recite *bani* so that the departed soul may rest at peace.

He advocated that the parents should teach their children a-b-c of *Gurmukhi* script so that they themselves could read *gurbani*. He emphasized that like the boys, the girls should also be given an equal opportunity. Namdhari Guru told his illiterate followers that as collecting one stone a day could raise a big heap similarly learning one letter a day could make a person literate.[56]

Briefly speaking, primary attributes of the Namdhari mission can be located in the Sikh tradition of *nam-simran* which the Namdhari Gurus received through the *Adi-Granth*, *Dasam Granth* and *rahit-namas*. Namdhari Guru Balak Singh started his moderate mission with emphasis on the *nam-simran*, futility of performing rituals and earning livelihood by honest means. His successors devoutly carried on this mission. Subsequently, their headquarters became *tap-asthan* (centre of meditation) for the Namdhari followers. However, Namdhari Guru Ram Singh was inspired by *Prem Sumarag* and revived Guru Gobind Singh's Khalsa and renamed it Sant Khalsa'. He evolved the attributes of his *maryada* on the basis *Adi-Granth, Dasam Granth, Rahit Namas* and *Prem Sumarag*. Simultaneously, he launched a tirade against the social

evils and priestly classes which used religious institutions and places for their vested interests. Thousands of the agriculturists and artisans who suffered socially and economically, responded to his millenarian mission (see 4th chapter). Thousands of his followers imagined as if Guru Gobind Singh had appeared in his personality. The British and their allies felt a threat from the resurgence of his followers.

Notes and References

1. There were several other *sants* and *babas* who established their centres of propagation of *nam-simran*. Prominent among them were Baba Dayal (1783-1855) and Baba Bir Singh of (1768-1844) of Naurangabad. The former was the founder of Nirankari mission whereas the latter established his *dera* in the village of Naurangabad near Tarn Taran: Harbans Singh (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Vol. I, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1992, pp. 265-66, 376-77. Similarly, Bhagat Jawahar Mal was known for his piety and addressed as Sain Sahib in 1847, Jawahar Mal opened a centre for divine worship entitled the *Jagiasi* and *Abhiasi*, see, Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. 2, Oxford India Paperbacks, 1999, p 128.
2. For a comprehensive analysis of these *rahit-namas*, see, WH Mcleod, *Sikhs of the Khalsa*, Oxford University, Press, 2005.
3. Ganda Singh, *Kukain di Vithia*, Amritsar 1944; Jaswinder Singh, *Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji de Hukamname*, Bhaini Sahib, Ludhiana, 1998.
4. For detail see, Harbans Singh (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Vol, III, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1997, pp. 427-430.
5. Ibid.
6. Fauja Singh Bajwa, *Kuka Movement*, Moti Lal Banarasi Dass, Delhi, 1965, pp.173-74.
7. From T.H. Thornton, Secretary to Government Punjab to J.W. Wyliee Secy, Govt. of India, Foregin Deptt, No-57, 2 Feb 1867; Nahar Singh, *Guru Ram Singh and the Kukas Sikhs: 1863-1871 Documents*-I, Amrit Co New Delhi; 1965, p. 29.
8. Gaini Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, Punjabi Language Department Patiala, 1970 (reprint) p. 1266.
9. Fauja Singh, *Kuka Movement*, pp. 4-5, see also, Jaswant Singh, *Baba Ram Singh Namdhari*, Kasturi Lal Sons Amritsar, 1958,p-I and *Satjug* June 1929, p. 25.
10. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, pp. 5-7.
11. Nahar Singh, pp 29-30.

12. There is a difference of opinion about the exact date of the initiation of the movement. Contemporary sources mention that 'Guru' Ram Singh commenced in the Ludhiana District about the year 1857: Nahar Singh. *Guru Ram Singh and the Kukas. Sikhs. Documents-Vol-I. p-30.* Ganda Singh, Fauja Singh and some others eminent scholars accept Baisakhi of 1857 A.D. See, Fauja Singh, *Kuka Movement.* p. 19. Ganda Singh. *Kukian di Vithiya*, p 34, M.M. Ahluwalia, *Kukas* p 53.
13. *Satjug*, 22 Magh 1986 (1929 A.D.), Fauja Singh, *Kuka Movement*, p 19.
14. Randhir Singh (ed.), *Granth Prem Sumarag: Arthat Khalsai Jiwan Jhach* (P), New Book Company, Jalandhar, 1965: see, its text, pp 1-4.
15. Jaswinder Singh, *Kuka Movement, Freedom Struggle in Punjab: Documents 1880-1903*, Atlantic Publishers, New Delhi, 1985, p 32.
16. Nahar Singh, *Guru Ram Singh and the Kuka Sikhs*, Vol. 1, p 28.
17. From T.H. Thorton Secretary to Government of Punjab to J.S. Wyllie, Officially Secy. to Government of India Foreign Deptt. No-154-157, dated 2nd Feb 1867: Nahar Singh Documents-I p-34.
18. From Inspector General of Police, Punjab to Secretary to Government Punjab-No-II- 188,20th January 1868: Nahar Singh, Vol-I pp 70-71.
19. M.M. Ahluwalia, *Kukas*, p. 64.
20. Nahar Singh, Documents, Vol-I, pp 12-13.
21. Giani Gian Singh, contemporary Nirmla scholar, corroborates the fact that *anand-riti* was observed by other Sikhs.

    ਸ੍ਰੀ ਰਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੂਕੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ,
    ਅਨੰਦ ਸੁਫੰਦ ਪੜਾਏ ਸਹਿਲੇ
    ਤਿਨਕੋ ਦੇਖ ਔਰ ਸਿਖ ਘਨੇ,
    ਲਗੇ ਆਨੰਦ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਵਨ ਤਨੇ।"

    cited in *Jange Azadi De Marg Darshak Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji Atte Namdhari Sikh* (Ajit Singh Namdhari), Punjab Government, 2007, p 10. Lieutenant Hamilton, District Superintendent of Police Ferozpur, 7th June 1863: Nahar Singh, pp 12-13.
22. Namdhari Guru Ram Singh was popularly known by the name of his horse also. He himself rode a favouite mare and was addressed as *Chiniwala Padshah*, Lord of Chini Horse. In the contemporary painting he is also seen riding on a horse, see *Satjug, Suba Sahib Singh, Ank* 28 Jeth 2012, Photo on p 19.
23. Dhian Singh, *Satguru Bilas*, p 173, see also, Nahar Singh, p 47.
24. Nahar Singh, pp. 1, 55, 57.
25. Fauja Singh, pp 37-38.
26. Jaswinder Singh, *Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji De Hukamname*, p. 120.
27. Ibid., pp. 350-351, 382-83.

28. Ibid
29. Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj, 1849-1947*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1988, pp 49-53, also see, *District & States Gazetteers of the Undivided Punjab*, Vol III, Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1993 (reprint) pp 678-679.
30. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, pp. 194-195.
31. Jaswinder Singh (ed.), *Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji De Hukamnname*, pp 120-21, 231-33.
32. Ibid., pp. 380-385, 418, 434, 451-52; 469-495; also Ganda Singh, p. 132-33, 138.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Namdhari Guru Ram Singh's letter cited in *Sabhan Ke Sirmaur*, pp.103-04.
37. Jaswinder Singh, *Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji De Hukamnname* P 374.
38. Ibid.
39. Randhir Singh (ed.), *Granth Prem Sumarag: Arthat Khalsai Jiwan Jhach*: also see; Harbans Singh (ed), *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Vol-III, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1997, p 367.
40. Op. Cit., p. 368; see Appendix—A
41. For instance, in regard to the eating taboos, this granth prescribes vegetarian and non-vegetarian food excepting halal whereas the Namdhari Guru and Kukas were and are vegetarians. This granth also mentions the mode of preparation of food with special emphasis on its purity. The Namdhari Gurus and the Kukas carried on this practice to that extent that they did not eat food cooked by the people other than the Namdhari Sikhs. Similarly, there are differences in regard to the dress code. The *Prem Sumarag* refers to the white dress comprising turban, *jama suped* (loose long shirt), *kachh* (short trouser) and *suthan* (long trouser). For the women, it prescribes gaudy dress and use of perfume and ornaments especially for the bride. But for the Namdhari women, the use of perfume and ornaments have had been taboos. The *Prem Sumarag* mentions the complex structure of rituals and customs which were to be observed on the occasions of birth, marriage and death. Here again Namdhari Gurus did not adopt these practices in their totality. The *Prem Sumarag* prescribes some rituals on the occasions of a Sikh woman becoming pregnant, son taking a birth and his *naam-karan*. The Namdhari maryada prescribes some similar rituals on such occasions excepting when a woman becomes pregnant. Similarly, the structure of marriage ceremony prescribed by the Namdhari Guru is different in terms of *Prem Sumarag's* prescription of dresses (for bride and bridegroom) special diet (non-vegetarian for bridegroom), use of ornaments, exchange of gifts by the parents of bride and bridegrooms, expenditure to be spent on marriage according to the financial position and arrangement of the feast for the

marriage party etc. Moreover, there is special emphasis on the use and worship of weapons which are not mentioned in the Namdhari maryada. Besides, the attributes of maryada of *Prem Sumarag* in regard to the sexual relationship between man and woman on the one hand and the exchange of women and status of legitimate and illegitimate of spring on the other are not part of the Namdhari maryada.: Text of *Prem Sumarag*. (Randhir Singh). *Arthat Khalsai Jiwan Jhach*, pp 38-40, 58-59, 74.

42. For, details see, *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Vol. IV, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1998, pp 80-81. Joginder Singh. *The Sikhs Resurgence*, National Book Organisation, New Delhi, 1987, p. 9: Fauja Singh *The Kuka Movement*, pp 40, 160-61, 184.
43. For detail see, Dalip Singh Namdhari, *Sant Khlasa*, Bhaini Sahib, 1999, Tara Singh Anjan, *Sabhan Ke Sirmaur*, Bhaini Sahib, Ludhiana, 1998.
44. Jaswinder Singh (ed), *Sri Satguru Ji De Hukamname*, pp. 242-243.
45. *Rahitnama* cited in Tara Singh Anjan, *Sabhahn Ke Sirmour*, pp 65-66.
46. For detail see, Himadri Banerji, *The Agrarian Society of the Punjab*, Manohar, New Delhi.
47. Doris R Jakobash, *Relocating Gender in Sikh History*, Oxford, 2003, p. III.
48. Ibid, also see, M.L. Daring. *The Punjab Peasant and Debt*, South Asian Books, Delhi, 1978 (reprint), pp. 48-59,132.
49. Jaswant Singh, *Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji De Hukamname*, pp. 296-297.
50. Ibid, also see, *Rahitnama* cited by Tara Singh Anjan, pp, 65-66.
51. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. IV, 1995, pp. xxi; Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, Oxford India Paperbacks, 1999, pp. 3-7.
52. Doris R, Jakobsh, p, 110.
53. Jaswinder Singh, *Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji De Hukamname*.
54. Nahar Singh (ed.), *Gooroo Ram Singh and the Kuka Singh*, Vol. I, Amrit Sahib, New Delhi, 1966, p. 9.
55. Khushwant Singh, *A History of Sikhs*, p. 129.
56. Ganda Singh, *Kukian di Vithia*, pp. 224, 30.

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CHAPTER—II
STRUGGLING AGAINST THE BRITISH RAJ

On the eve of celebration of hundred fifty years of Uprising of 1857, the historians and scholars are *Rethinking 1857* in the 'rubrics' ranging from 'mutiny', 'rebellion', 'uprising', 'revolution' and 'first war of independence'. In fact questioning the conventional historiography of 1857, the book entitled *Rethinking 1857* includes theme on the 'impact of 1857 on tribal and *dalit* communities who have been marginalized by the mainstream of Indian society as well as by the dominant traditions in historiography.' Moreover, *Rethinking 1857* considers uprisings in the regions beyond the north Indian Gangetic heartland, which have scarcely merited mention in the narratives of 1857 till recent times' and finally *Rethinking 1857* includes theme about 'the alternatives polity that was posited, briefly and without success, during the Uprising of 1857- an area that has hardly been dealt with historians'. It is laudable effort. Yet *Rethinking 1857* does not extend its scope to the role of the Sikhs.[1] In fact, there have been specific reasons for not seeing the linkages between events of 1857 and the Kuka movement. This chapter begins with a note on the works published on the Kuka movement. Afterwards it explores these linkages and continuity of this movement.

I

As noted in the introduction that before the publication of works of Fauja Singh and M.M. Ahluwalia in 1960s and 1970s, scholars and historians assumed that the Kuka movement was essentially a socio-religious reform movement and its confrontation with the British raj was accidental. Putting Nirankaris and Namdharis in the perspective of socio-reform movement has remained a popular theme till this date. Secondly, Fauja Singh and M.M Ahluwala

adequately argued that the ultimate objective of the Kuka movement was political. They made us believe that this movement was national movement and the Kuka Sikhs were freedom fighters. Logically speaking, the 'patriotic' and 'nationalistic' imports seen by these scholars in the Kuka movement bring Kuka Sikhs very close to the leaders of the Uprising of 1857 if latter is perceived in terms of 'first war of independence'. However, Fauja Singh and M.M. Ahluwalia did not try to analyse the Kuka movement in response to the Uprising of 1857. Whereas the Sikh scholars and historians who studied the 'Sikhs and the Mutiny of 1857', perceived the role of the Sikhs in terms of their loyalty to the raj and argued that they went all out for defending the raj. They explained pro-British stance of the Sikhs in terms of (a) draining out the spirit and resources of the Khalsa by the two 'Anglo-Sikh Wars' and creating vacuum of political leadership; b) administrative and economic measures by the raj to restore order and promote prosperity; c) animosity and hostility existing between the Khalsa veterns and the *Poorbias* or Hindustani sepoys. They argued at length that the British comprehensively exploited the anti-Muslim or anti-Poorbia sentiments of the Sikhs to keep them on their side. In fact, some of the Sikh scholars became apologetic for such type of role of their co-religionists. Consequently, emphasis on the loyalist role of the Sikh Chiefs, Sardars, Jagirdars and Zamindars foreclosed the scope of reviewing the role of the Sikh peasants, artisans and landless people during and after the Uprising of 1857.[2] For the first time, Dolores Domin, a German scholar, made an in-depth study of the "Role of the Sikhs in the People's Uprising" in 1977 and informed us that for studying their role one has to examine the heterogeneous composition of the Sikhs. The latter comprised the Sikh chiefs, landed aristocracy, peasantry and artisans. In terms of their loyality as well as their socio-economic position, they operated at different levels. Dolores for the first time, for instance, differentiating the role of each category of these Sikhs, argued that neither all the veteran Sikh Sardars nor the Sikh soldiers were loyal

to the raj and behaved slavishly. A large section of the Sikh Darbaris and Sardars had shifted their loyalty towards the British before and after the annexation of the Khalsa raj. She does not state the fact that these Sikhs were not exceptions. The Muslims chiefs and landed aristocracy had also shifted their loyalty to the raj even before the outbreak of first Anglo-Sikh War. However, she adequately highlighted the fact that there was a large number of the 'insurgent' Sikh soldiers who fought along with the Hindustani sepoys against the British. She devotes one chapter on the role of 'insurgent' Sikh soldiers. She also stated that in some regions, the Sikhs remained passive. Dolores' analysis is essentially based upon the British administrative and economic policies towards the 'feudal classes' and peasantry. In the initial phase, these policies weakened the feudal classes and favoured the peasantry whereas in the later stage, these policies reversed the order. Moreover, Dolores's study also focused on the demography of the Punjab. The Sikhs lost their raj and were in minority. The Muslims constituted more than 50% of the total population. Next to them were Hindus. The West Punjab was dominated by the Muslims and East Punjab by the Hindus. The Sikhs were prominent only in the central Punjab. This demographic status of the Sikhs had bearings on their role.[3]

Dolorer's paradigm for the analysis of rise of the Namdhari agriculturists and artisans against the British raj is not applicable as she argues that the Sikh peasantry and soldiers including the Mazhabi Singhs were given special favours in the post-Uprising of 1857. The Sikh peasantry was favoured in terms of moderate and equitable revenue charges. Subsequently, the Sikh landed aristocracy and peasantry was also awarded with the landsquares in the canal-colonies. Similarly, the Sikhs including Mazhabi Singhs were recruited on priority. The retired police and military personnel were awarded landsquares in the canal-colonies for rendering valuable services to the raj. Dolore's argument is comprehensively substantiated by the studies of Imran Ali and Rajit K. Mazumdar. The former gives statistics of landsquares given to the Sikh landed aristocracy and

peasantry whereas the latter too gives the statistics of the Sikh army personnel with special reference to the Martial Races Theory.[4] The logic of this argument is that since the economic conditions of the Sikh peasantry and status of the landed aristocracy were improved by these measures, therefore, they were content with the raj. Their rise against the raj was out of question. It is on this logic Khushwant Singh came to the same conclusion.[5]

However, neither the benefits of the colonial rule percolated to all social groups of the Sikh community nor these benefits could supplant the nostalgia of the Khalsa raj. In the wake of these ground realities, W.H. McLeod is the first scholar who examined the rise of the Kuka movement in terms of social discontentment prevalent among the Namdhari agriculturists and artisans in the second half of 19th century. In his article entitled "The Kukas: A Millenarian Sect of the Punjab" he used the term millenarian to characterize religious movements that expected imminent, total, ultimate, the worldly collective salvation. According to his paradigm, four phases of the Namdhari movement could be marked. In the first phase, it involves the spread of social discontent with a particular geographical area with the consequent emergence of substantial group of disoriented and frustrated people. This is followed by the second phase when a holy man appears as inspired and perhaps a divine. The third phase results from a junction of the leader and the group, a connection which produces a fraternity fortified with a social myth adapted to their needs. Finally, the fourth phase, issue is 'a frantic urge to smite' and ungodly and irresistible impulse to strike out at the person, the group or the institution identified as the source of falsehood and oppression.

McLeod discusses the social discontment among the Namdhari agriculturists and artisans with reference to the impact of increasing population and re-occurances of famines and exploitation of the agriculturists by the *sahukars*. McLeod argues that it was economic distress which alienated the Sikh agriculturists and artisans from the British raj. The alienated agriculturists and

artisans responded to messianic message of Namdhari Guru Ram Singh. The Namdhari Guru and his *subas* assured these masses a kingdom free from socio-economic sufferings. Moreover, the Namdhari Sikhs challenged the British raj on the issue of kine-killing.[6]

McLeod's paradigm excludes the response of a section of landed aristocracy, who too most probably, was fascinated by the charismatic personality of Namdhari Guru Ram Singh and his vision of restoration of the Khalsa raj. This aristocracy comprised Sardars, Jagirdars and Zamindars. They were not 'malechh Khalsa'. They were 'Sant Khalsa' who longed for the restoration of the Khalsa raj. Important among these Sardars and Jagirdars were Sardar Lehha Singh Gharjakhia, son-in-law of Sardar Hari Singh Nalva, Sardar Tara Singh, cousin of former Governor of Suba Peshawar; Sardar Mann Singh, son of Sardar Budh Singh, Rais of Mianwal; Zaildar Anokh Singh and Lambardar Amrik Singh of Chuharkana; Lambardar Jawahar Singh (of Saharanpur); Lamdardar Raja Singh (of Manhes); Mehtab Singh, Ahla Nambardar of Shekhwan; Buta Singh Lambardar of Manga. Perhaps most important and influential was Diwan Buta Singh of Lahore city. He was son of Gurdial Singh and Kalal by caste. Buta Singh was personal attendant of Maharani Jinda, mother of Maharaja Dalip Singh. He was arrested by the British for being involved in the rebellion in Multan. He was awarded seven years' imprisonment for exciting the people against the British. After spending seven years in Allahabad fort, he came back to Lahore. He owned huge property and founded press and started a law periodical in 1866. He also established printing press in Peshawar and Ajmer. His printing press in Ajmer published Government Gazetteer. Being a close confidant of Namdhari Guru Ram Singh, he printed several copies of the *Adi Granth* and other Sikh books.[7]

In Gurdaspur, local influential leaders became Namdhari Sikhs. The Bedis of Dera Baba Nanak were those traditional leaders who traced their lineage to Guru Nanak Dev. Kartar Singh

Bedi became Namdhari and was appointed Suba. Zaildar Hari Singh of Singhpuria was Naib-Suba. Being an influential person in his area, he brought several Bedi Sahibzade like Amar Singh, Partap Singh, Jagir Singh and Gurdas Singh into the Namdhari fold. His two sons, Narain Singh and Sham Singh were also Kukas. Moreover, his persuasion brought people of several villages like Thetherke, Pakhoke, Choranwali, Punan and Khokhar into the Namdhari fold. Bhai Gobind Ram of Shri Hargobindpur and his brother became staunch Kukas.[8]

Lambardar Mehtab Singh of Uboke, Amritsar was a successful Namdhari preacher. Sardar Naina Singh of village Waryia was one of the close confidants of Namdhari Guru Ram Singh. Some of the Sikhs of villages Thath, Kakkar and Lopoke were impressed by Namdhari Baba Mehtab Singh's morality and became Namdharis.

Sardar Mann Singh of village Purheeran, District Hoshiarpur was one of those Namdhari Jagirdars who faced opposition from his own brothers. His cousin Bhai Hamir Singh was police informer. Inspite of this opposition, Sardar Mann Singh organized *hollas* and performed *bhogs* of the *Adi Granth*. Sardar Chanda Singh was another Jagirdar of Kalubahar, Thana Hariana who observed Namdhari practices.

The Namdhari influence was wide spread in District Ferozepur. Kahn Singh of village Baja (Faridkot) and Deva Singh of Dhurkot were heads of the Namdhari congregation. Sodhi Fateh Singh, Jagirdar of Chugavan (Moga) and his brother Hira Singh were prominent Namdhari Sikhs. Suba Man Singh Saidoke, Thana Nihal Singhwala was financially well-to-do Namdhari Sikh. Similarly, Mistri Nihal Singh of Ferozepur city was well known for his wealth and character.[9]

As a consequence of concentrated efforts made by the Namdhari Guru and missionary *Jathas* for spreading the Khalsa *maryada* and its superiority, thousands of Sikhs of District Ludhiana

became Kukas. The following villages were major centres of the Namdhari Sikhs:

a) Khatra: (police station Delhon) Suba Attar Singh belonged to this village.

b) Raipur: among others Baba Darbara Singh Lambardar and Jaimal Singh Lambardar were prominent Kukas. Village Lohgarh earned the reputation of being Chhota Bhaini (small Bhaini). There were several Namdhari Sikhs who openly preached against the government. Among them was Nambardar Kahn Singh, son of Albel Singh. Kukas of Gujarwal were also known for their hostility towards the British. Lambardar of one of the *pattis* of Gujarwal village was leader of these Kukas. The village Kalahar was represented by Khazan Singh *Thanedar* and Namberdar Lal Singh.

Besides, the Kukas of villages Rayana (Sahnewal), Johal (Ranikot) and Machhiwara were under police surveillance. Prominent were Lambardars of Machhiwara and Khanna. Jagirdar Bishan Singh of Kotla Ajmer was also Kuka. Several *pattis* of big villages like Dalla, Malla, Rasulpur and Kaunke were dominated by the Kukas.[10]

In District Ambala, there were several Zamindars and Jagirdars who became Kukas. For instance, Attar Singh was Jagirdar of Kot Kachhva. He was retired Police Inspector. Sardar Dal Singh was Lambardar of Jhharmari. Baba Khushdial Singh was Zamindar of village Kheri (Therajwala) District Sirsa. He was well known for his liberal charity.

The proceeding paras clearly show that the Namdhari Guru was able to mobilize the Zamindars, Jagirdars, *Ahalkars* and Rais of different areas. It were they who sponsored the Namdhari *hollas* and *diwans* since they were resourceful persons. The religio-political affiliations of the local leaders towards the Namdhari Guru became a serious matter for the British government since it

was trying to consolidate its raj in terms of coalescing the interests of the landed gentry with the raj. Namdhari Guru's policy ran against the official policy. However, when the British resolved to crush the Kuka movement, a substantial number of this section of Namdhari following disassociated themselves from *Kukaism*. Either they led apolitical life or they sided with the British subsequently.

II

The beginning of resistance of the Namdhari Sikhs to the colonial rule can be traced when their Guru Ram Singh laid the basis of an alternative polity in terms of forming 'Sant Khalsa' on 12th April, 1857. He told the congregation that he formed Sant Khalsa on behalf of Guru Gobind Singh. Therefore, it was the real Khalsa. He was convinced that his 'Sant Khalsa' was morally superior to its contemporary Khalsa (of Lahore Kingdom). For him the latter was as corrupt as the British were. Both were responsible for the destruction of the Khalsa raj. After initiating the Sikhs to the Sant Khalsa he evolved specific code of conduct which could inculcate the martial spirit in them. He also evolved *suba* system, mode of communication and traditional strategy of mobilizing his followers.

> His fame had spread rapidly and by 1863 he had been able to recruit as many as 40,000 disciples and by 1866, the number of these disciples multiplied to 60,000. His rank and file swelled as a result of the 1857 resurrection.[11]

T.A.O. Cornor, Officiating District Superintendent of Police Hoshiarpur, prepared the list of chiefs of the Kuka Sect in 1871. The chiefs included head of the sect, *Subas, Sardars* and *Jagirdars*. Out of 50 chiefs, there were 46 *Subas Naib-Subas*: one *Sardar* and one *Jagirdar* who held the status of *suba*, two *Jagirdars* and one female *suba*. Five *subas* served the Sikh army of Lahore and five *subas* served the British army and either they resigned themselves or were dismissed from the service. Remarks appended to these *subas* by the British officials are important to note their

'links' with the Mutiny of 1857. To begin with Lakha Singh, son of Rur Singh, he was Jat resident of Chhut Bullor, Patiala. He was sepoy in the 2nd Police Battalion (Sherdil) in which he was a drill instructor. Deputy Superintendent described him as 'of a turbulent and fanatical disposition, capable of creating a disturbance.' He was said to have been recently imprisoned in Patiala. Bhagwan Singh, son of Sukhoo Ram, was resident of Banga, Nawanshahar, District Jalandhar. He served for five years in second cavalry under Major Brown. He was Naib Risaldar in Hudson's Horse during the Mutiny. He resigned in 1860. Maluk Singh was Jat and resident of Bholeval Mukatsar District Ferozepur. He also served in a Regiment during 1857-58. The police report described him as an influential and seditious fanatic. Prem Singh, son of Khushal Singh, was Jat by caste and resident of village Bursalpur, Roopur District Ludhiana. Dismissal by the British authorities or resignation by themselves show that these personnel were not loyal to the government. Rather they were more loyal to the Namdhari Guru who appointed them *subas*. (There is need to enquire into the causes and circumstances under which they left their jobs.) There were several *subas* and activists who, in the official circles, were more dangerous. Among them was Sardar Mangal Singh of Dholpur Patiala State. It is said that the Raja of Patiala offered him many inducement to leave the Sect (Kuka) but he would not leave it. He was turned out of Patiala and stayed with Namdhari Guru Ram Singh. He was an important follower in the sense that his joining the Kukas had more effect in furthering the cause than any event. He gave financial help to the Namdhari Guru. Besides, some of these *subas* were described as fiercely fanatical and capable of creating disturbance. Among them were Sahib Singh, Pahara Singh and Hukma Singh. Macnabb's report described Sahib Singh as an 'intelligent, clever and determined looking, much the abler of the Subas'. According to the same report, Pahara Singh was 'a fanatical dangerous looking man' who accompanied Namdhari Guru Ram Singh on different tours to the historical places. He

exercised substantial influence on the Namdhari followers. Similarly, Hukma Singh was dedicated to the religious activities and preached sedition.[12] Infact, most of the Subas were old companions of the Namdhari Guru. When the latter was deported in 1872, Suba Gurcharan Singh and Suba Bishan Singh, as we shall note, played a significant role in widening the scope of the Kuka movement.

Similarly, more links between the Uprising of 1857 and Kuka movement are perceptible when we note that there were several former 'sepoys' or personnel who got themselves recruited in the Kuka Regiment raised in Jammu and Kashmir. In 1870, "Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir got up two companies, comprising two hundred men, with the intention of making them the nuclear of a regular Kuka regiment, just in the same way as he has regular regiments of (illegible) and Dogras. His orders to those whom he sent to Panjab to recruit were, to get men of fine physique and good families; his idea being that, by having men of good family, he could, through their influence, get their relatives in like manner to enlist for his service.....".[13] The District Superintendent of Police Gujranwala gives a list of 33 members of companies of Kuka Regiment of Jammu and Kashmir State. Among these 33 Kuka soldiers, there were several Kuka Sikhs who were in the British police and army or in some civil departments or served the Lahore Darbar. Prem Singh was sepoy of Maharaj (Bhai Maharaj Singh III); Bahadur Singh, sepoy of Sadowrah, was formerly sepoy in a Native Infantry Regiment. Shoun Singh was formerly sergeant in Ferozepur. Lal Singh, sepoy of Sadowrah, was also formerly sepoy in a Native Infantry Regiment. Moreover, Adjutant Tara Singh of Kuka Regiment was son of Chatar Singh and nephew of the Late Colonel Mihan Singh, of the Sikh service and at one time Governor of Kashmir. Under the British rule, Tara Singh was in the 7th Police Battalion (Amritsar Regiment) and was dismissed by the British from the service in 1858 for very suspicious conduct during mutiny.[14]

Namdhari Guru Ram Singh and his followers carried on the 'insurgent' tradition of Bhai Maharaj Singh (d. 1856) a saintly person turned revolutionary who led a crusade against the British in Punjab after the first Anglo-Sikh War. Maharaj Singh's revolutionary carrier started with the 'Prema conspiracy case' involving him in a plot to murder British Resident, Henry Lawrence, and other pro-British officers of the Lahore Darbar. When the British restricted his movement, he went underground. The government confiscated his property at Amritsar and announced a reward for his arrest. He supported the rebellion of Diwan Mool Raj in June 1848 with 400 horse men. He fought against the British in the battles of Ram Nagar, Chellianvala and Gujarat. After the annexation of Lahore Kingdom, he resolved to carry on this fight. He escaped to Jammu and made Dev Batala his secret headquarters in December 1849. Later on, he went to Hoshiarpur and visited the Sikh Regiment (British) to enlist their support. He also developed rapport with the Sikh soldiers in Jalandhar Cantonment. It may be pointed out here that the Sikh sepoys stationed in this cantonment rebelled along with the Hindustani sepoys against the British during 1857. The impact of persuasions of Bhai Maharaj Singh on these sepoys can not be overruled. During his struggle, Bhai Maharaj Singh circulated the *Sau-Sakhis* in which, he assured the people that Khalsa would regain sovereignty in Punjab. It is important to know that these *Sakhis* were circulated in 1848 and during the Uprising of 1857. Same *Sakhis*, as we will note, were circulated by the Kuka Sikhs. Bhai Maharaj Singh carried on his head a price of 10,000 rupees. He was arrested on 28th December, 1849 at Adampur. 'The Guru is no ordinary man,' wrote Dr. Vansittart, the Jalandhar Deputy Commissioner, who had arrested him. 'He is to the natives what Jesus is to the most zealous of Christians. His miracles were seen by tens of thousands and are implicitly believed than those worked by the ancient prophets.'[15] Vansittart was so greatly impressed by Bhai Maharaj Singh's personality that he recommended special treatment to be accorded him, but the government did not wish to

take any risks and deported him to Singapore where, after several years of solitary confinement, he died on 5 July 1856. He had gone blind before the end came.'[16] Namdhari Guru Ram Singh and his followers held Bhai Maharaj Singh in great esteem in the context of anti-British struggle.

By 1864, Namdhari Guru declared his political mission in the following words. "I, Guru Govind Singh, will be born in a carpenter's shop, and will be called Ram Singh. My house will be between the Jamna and Sutlej rivers. I will declare my religion. I will defeat the *Faringhis* and put the crown on my own head, and blow the *sankh*. The musicians shall praise me in 1921 (1864). I, the carpenter, will sit on the throne. When I have got one lakh and twenty-five thousand Sikhs with me, I will cut off the heads of the *Faringhis* (sic). I will never be conquered in battle, and will shout "Akal, Akal". The Christians will desert their wives and fly from the country when they hear the shout of 1¼ lakhs of Khalsa. A great battle will take place on the banks of the Jamna, and blood will flow like the waters of the Ravi, and no Frunghi (sic) be left alive. Insurrections will take place in the country in 1922 (1865). The Khalsa will reign, and the Rajah and ryot will live in peace and comfort, and no one shall molest another."

"Day by day Ram Singh's rule will be enlarged. God has written this. It is no lie, my brethren. In 1865, the whole country will be ruled by Ram Singh. My followers will worship Wahaguru. God says this will happen."[17]

In fact, the *Sakhi* literature, which was resurrected both by the Sikh veterans and Namdhari Guru Ram Singh during and after the Uprising of 1857, reflected unfulfilled desire of the Khalsa of 18th century to establish its hegemony over the Gangetic plans. Subsequently, Maharaja Ranjit Singh also made an effort to establish his hegemony over the Malwa region. His efforts were frustrated by the British intervention. However, when the Uprising of 1857 broke out, as noted earlier, the Khalsa veterans circulated *Sakhis* with the above said motive. Governor General Canning confirmed

the rumours of the Sikh uprising. In 1857, quoting a prophecy, he said 'The imperial city of the Mughals would some day be given up to plunder of the Khalsa.' K.C. Yadav rightly points out that it was 'not plunder but the rule of the Khalsa'. After Bhai Maharaj Singh, it was Namdhari Guru Ram Singh and his followers who articulated the unfulfilled desire of the Khalsa to recover its lost kingdom. Moreover, the *Sau Sakhis* presented an alternative structure of the British raj. The latter was personification of communal hatredness as it allowed the cow-killing. It hurt the religious sentiments of the Hindus and Sikhs alike. The butchers were allowed to violate custom of cow protection and its worship. The hawkers were allowed to sold beef in the thickly populated area of the Hindus and Sikhs. Moreover, the *Sakhi* literature invoked the concept of *shahid* to rekindle the spirit for sacrifice among the (Sant) Khalsa. The concept of a *shahid* in *Sakhi* literature imagined a mythical character who enjoyed a direct rapport with god and exercised supernatural powers. In mid 19th century, the people obeyed and worshiped that character. However, in Sikh tradition such character was perceived in the form of Baba Deep Singh. The circulation of the *Sakhi* literature was meant for the Sant Khalsa. The latter was expected to emulate the supernatural character of *shahid*.[18] Above all, the *Sakhi* literature was expected to rejuvenate Sant Khalsa for its ultimate triumph over its enemy. Faith of the Khalsa in its victory posed a threat to the established authority (British).

Incidence of Tharajwala in February 1869 brought their aspiration for restoring the Khalsa rule to the forefront. According to the Inspector General of Police, Punjab, 44 Kuka Sikhs sold of their land holdings as well as households and came to stay at Bhaini Sahib headquarters. After some time, they started rallying around Bhai Mastan Singh who was so excited with the idea of restoring Khalsa rule that he was 'disgusted with his Guru Ram Singh's inaction'. Bhai Mastan Singh was Lambardar of village Tharajwala, District Sirsa (Haryana). The Deputy Commissioner, Ferozepur

deputed Deputy Inspector, Diwan Bakshi, to keep a close watch on the rebellious activities of these Kukas. When Beli Singh and Mahna Singh, close associates of Mastan Singh noted that they were being chased by the police they reacted violently. In the incident, police party and their horses were injured. However, the Superintendent Police supported by Sodhi Mann Singh were able to over power Mastan Singh and his colleagues. Keeping in view of volatile situation the Commissioner Lieutenant, Lahore instructed the officials not to trial these Kuka Sikhs as rebels, but for creating problem of law and order.

As hinted above, the Namdhari Guru made some efforts to build up political links with the native rulers of neighbouring states. He thought that the Kuka Sikhs could be given some military training. He made an attempt to get a Kuka regiment set up in the service of the Maharaja of Kashmir. For this purpose, some of the prominent Kukas approached Maharaja of Kashmir. Maharaja promised to do that. For sometime, about 200 to 250 persons were enrolled and given training. The Namdhari Guru also sent his confidants to Nepal with the presents to the government of the state. Since ruler of Nepal did not have good relations with British, the Namdhari Guru thought of taking advantage of that situation.

The British officials perceived these activities in terms of a rebellion which could spread. This threat was not notional since "the Namdhari Sikhs had 'invented and perfected their own system of sending and receiving messages, letters, and orders, from and to their Central Headquarters. They surveyed their own routes of communication from one place to another. They made contacts in far-flung places. By the year 1871, the Namdhari Sikhs had put up their active centers at Gwalior, Peshawar, Kabul, Nepal, Bhutan and Kashmir. They had also contacted and formed friendship with Maharaja of Nepal, Maharaja of Kashmir, and Dev Raja of Bhutan. In Nepal, the Namdhari representatives met Nand Ram, a Panjabi Rajput, who had played a conspicuous part during the Mutiny of 1857, and was thus given the name of General by his comrades. In

the year 1871, the British Government sent its secret agent, Raja Shivraj Singh of Kashipur to Nepal to find out the whereabouts of the Indian rebels residing in Nepal. On his return to India, Raja Sahib reported that he had met and talked to Kirpal Singh Kuka and had also met the younger brother of Tantiya Tope, but he could not find any trace about Nana Sahib and Kishan Singh Kuka.[19]

The Government, in the meantime, felt alarmed at the secret activities of the Namdhari Sikhs. The two seniormost officers of the Panjab Government were ordered to prepare detailed reports regarding the Namdhari organization, its aims, and its activities. Macnabb, in his long report dated 4th November, 1871, reached the following conclusions:

> Whatever may have been the intentions of the leaders of the sect at the beginning, its tendency is distinctly political. Many men of position are joining the sect. It seems necessary, for the internal safety and tranquility of the country, that Guru Ram Singh be deported to some place, where he cannot be visited by his worshippers. I am strongly of the opinion that the safest thing to do with Guru Ram Singh is to transport him to the Andamans... if the Government prefer to act against him directly under Act III of 1818. it should be done at once
>
> Lt. Colonel G. McAndrew in his memorandum dated 20th November 1871 wrote:- "It appears to me to be a case in which Government may fairly act without the usual course of elaborate legal procedure and as matter of general expediency and good government, send Guru Ram Singh out of the country. He and his followers have now given most undoubted signs of a disposition to set all law and order at defiance.[20]

The reports of the responsible officers of the Government set a wave of fear and indignation in the minds of the British officers against the Kukas. They read the signs of a general

revolution in the country, organized and headed by the Namdhari Guru and his followers. Some of them apprehended the shadows of 1857 in the programme and activities of the sect. Nearly all of them were on the watch to find some opportunity to annihilate and crush the movement.

It is well known fact that the outbreak Uprising of 1857 was started by the Hindustani sepoys. They were particularly affected by the anti-British feeling that prevailed in the country. Orders forbidding the wearing of caste-marks, beards, or turbans were looked upon by them as infringements of religious rights.[21] Superstitious Hindus lent a willing ear to the gossip that their ration of flour had bones of animals ground and mixed in it. When, in the autumn of 1856, the old musket, the Brown Bess, was replaced by the more efficient Enfield rifle, the story that the grease on the cap of the new cartridge was extracted from the fat of cows and pigs was readily accepted. The sepoys, both Hindu and Muslim, felt that the time had come for them to make a choice: they could either threw up their jobs and serve their gods or stick to them and serve the English.

One of the informers of police surveillance informed Capt. Millar, Cantonment Magistrate, Jalandhar on 18th June, 1863 that the Namdhari Guru knew "that cartridges, prepared in the same way as in 1857, were again about to be distributed, and caps also filled with the same obnoxious stuff". But ruthless, suppression of Uprising of 1857 made this strategy and tactics employed by the Hindustani rebels redundant. The only workable strategy and tactics in Punjab were emotional and sentimental appeals to the Sikhs and Hindus. Inadvertently, the British provided opportunity to Namdhari Guru Ram Singh. The British policy of lifting prohibition of kine-killing offended the religious sentiments of the Sikhs and Hindus. As early as 1849, the Board of Administration lifted this prohibition. This order encouraged the Muslims to practice cow-killing. The Board of Administration issued the following bye-laws.
(a) cows will be slaughtered at a particular place outside the town
(b) no shop will be opened in the town for the open sale of beef.

The Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar allowed the opening of slaughter house outside the city in accordance to the above bye-laws. The opening of a kine-slaughter house at Amritsar gave a signal for opening of many more such slaughter houses in different towns throughout the Punjab. Since the starting of a slaughter house at Amritsar, the Muslim butchers started the sale of beef openly in the streets of Amritsar. On 7th May, 1856, a culprit involved in such a crime was produced before F. Cooper, Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar. The cases of sale of beef in the streets populated by the Hindus and Sikhs were subsequently reported. Consequently, the relations between Hindus and Sikhs on the one side and Muslims on the other side became tense. By the year 1871, the tension gave to communal quarrels, open fights and riots. The Divisional Commissioner had to intervene and tried to pacify the Hindus and the Sikhs of the city who were disgusted over the kine-killing. Meanwhile, the Muslims afloated rumour that four more shops will be opened in the city for sale of beef and that one of these will be adjacent to the precincts of the Holy Tank of the Golden Temple. The Hindus and the Sikhs were emotionally disturbed to see that bites and crows started throwing bones in the holy tank or nearby place. One of such bones was picked up by Bhai Deva Singh who placed it before the sacred scripture in the Golden Temple on 24th April, 1871. Bhai Deva Singh's intention was to provoke the Sikhs to stop this obnoxious thing. Bhai Deva Singh was arrested by Sardar Bahadur Mangal Singh Ramgharia; the Custodian Manager of Golden Temple. He was sentenced to three year's rigorous imprisonment and one month's solitary imprisonment. The non-Muslims of the city became alarmed but felt helpless. Being the protectors of poor and helpless people, the Namdhari Sikhs took up cudgels for stopping cow-killing in sacred city. On the night of 14th June, about eight Namdhari Sikhs attacked the butchers inside the slaughter house. Three butchers were killed on the spot and three were badly wounded. The local police officer arrested and challaned twelve Hindu and Sikh inhabitants of the city for

these murders. The police tortured them to confess their crime. The accused were committed to the sessions by the Deputy Commissioner. When the Namdhari Guru came to know that the innocent were going to be punished, he ordered the culprits (Namdhari Sikhs) to produce themselves before the magistrate and confess their guilt. On their own confession, 4 Namdharis were hanged on 15th September, 1871.

Similar murders of the butchers by the Namdharis had also taken place at Raikot in the Ludhiana District, on the 15th July, 1871. Of the butchers, 4 were killed on the spot and 7 badly injured. In this case, 7 accused, 5 belonging to Nabha State and 2 to Patiala State were arrested with the help of the Maharajas of Patiala and Nabha. They were produced before a magistrate at village Bassian. An effort was made by the police to implicate and involve Namdhari Guru Ram Singh as an instigator and abettor. He was summoned to appear before the magistrate at Bassian which he did. On the 5th August 1871. Three of them were hanged at Raikot in the presence of a large gathering. The remaining two accused, Giani Rattan Singh and Rattan Singh of Naiwala involved in this case, were later on hanged at Ludhiana outside the jail premises, on 26th November 1871.[22]

Soon after a climax followed on January 13, 1872, a group of Kuka Sikhs from Bhaini attacked the obscure fort of Malodh in Ludhiania district and then with the additional number attempted to force a way into the town of Malerkotla. The Kukas contemplated that they could overpower Malodh estate and then Malerkotla; secure arms and horses. Nevertheless, they could not anticipate the resistance from Malodh fort of Badan Singh. In the fighting they suffered losses: two killed and four wounded but were able to get three swords, one double-barallel gun, two horses and one mare. Delay in attacking Malerkotla gave State forces time to prepare themselves for this eventuality. In the fighting that ensued between the Kukas (125 in number) and State forces both suffered several causalities.

Having failed in their objective, these Kûkas retreated into Patiala territory. Sixty-eight of them including two women were rounded up at the village of Rur. Meanwhile, L. Cowan, Officiating Deputy Commissioner of Ludhiania, hastened to Malerkotla and when the prisoners arrived over there he proceeded to blow forty-nine of them away from guns but without trail. This he did inspite of the earlier caution which he had received from T.D. Forsyth, Commissioner of Ambala Division. He also received the second letter from Forsyth but did not bother to restrain himself. In that letter, Forysth explicitly ordered Cowan to follow legal course. In fact, Cowan was predetermined to execute the Kukas. In his letter to the Commissioner of Ambala Division dated 17th January, 1872, he said "I am in hourly expectation of the arrival of the prisoners from Rurr. I propose to execute at once all who were engaged in the attacks on Malodh and Kotla. I am sensible of the great responsibility, I incur in exercising an authority which is not vested in me, but the case is an exceptional one. These men are not ordinary criminals. They are rebels having their immediate object of the acquisition of plunder, and ultimately subversion of order. It is certain that, had their first attempt been crowned with success, had they succeeded in arming themselves and providing themselves with horses and treasure they would have been joined by all the abandoned characters in the country; and their extinction would not have been effected without much trouble. By the timely preparation of Kotla the first efforts were defeated, and by the active exertion of the Patiala officials, this miserable attempt at rebellion has been stamped out, but others of their stamp must be dettered from following so bad an example and that the warning should be effectual, it must be prompt and terrible. I have every confidence then that the Government of Panjab will approve of the immediate execution of those prisoners who have been taken red-handed."[23] With this revengeful spirit, Cowan blew up the last batch of the Kuka prisoners. Among his victims was a child who attacked him ferociously but was cut down to pieces at the spot. The child was

persuaded by Cowan to be pliable to the British but he refused to give up his religious cause. Forsyth himself made mockery of the British law when he approved Cowan's report. In his report, he justified his action of summary trail.

The official justification of the summary execution of the Kuka Sikhs is worth noting for several reasons. First and foremost is that it shows the continuity of ruthlessness of the local British civil and police officials since 1857. They found parallels between the 'Mutiny' of 1857 and insurgency of the Kuka Sikhs. The summary execution of the Kukas was 'warranted by a former precedent when large number of rebels were thus disposed off 1857'. Moreover, these officials were backed up by their seniors. The barbaric action of Cowan was not only approved by T.D. Forsyth, Commissioner of Ambala Division, but admired by him. Forsyth said 'My Dear Cowan, I fully approve and confirm all you have done. You have acted admirably.' The British officials saw a bigger danger in the traditional strategy of the Namdhari Guru and his followers. The issue of cow-killing could mobilize the sympathies of Hindus and Sikhs in support of the Kuka Sikhs. L.H. Griffen, Officiating Secretary to the Government Punjab, wrote that the Lt. Governor felt that "the real danger of that creed in the form, which it has assumed, consists in this, that it appeals strongly to the sympathies of large section of the Native Community outside the circle of avowed Kukas. The denunciation of kine-killing and even the active measures taken against butchers at Raikot and Amritsar, have enlisted to a certain extent the sympathies of even well-disposed Hindus while the predictions of a restoration of the Khalsa raj made an appeal to the sympathies of all Sikhs who have not forgotten the traditions of the past. There is an evidence, no doubt, to show that no general coalition exists at present between the orthodox Sikhs and the Kukas; but there is also evidence to show that the hostile feelings between these sects is less strong than formerly, in the recent large accession to the number of the Kukas from the ranks of the Sikhs, and in the fact that while a few

years ago, no men of good family and position had joined the new creed; there is now a considerable number of petty Sirdars and men of family among its avowed adherents.

> There is no evidence further to show with what precise intention, or with what success Kuka emissaries have visited distant parts of India or States, on its northern border; but it may be safely presumed that the intention was political and not religious, from the open assertions of the Kukas, that they expect aid from Nepal and Kashmir, that the troops of the Cis-Sutlej States would join them in the event of a rising and that the ranks of the British army contained numerous members of their creed.[24]

The unethical justification of the barbarous act of Cowan came from the Sikh Sardars. They presented an address in Urdu to the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab in Darbar held at Amritsar in March and Governor of Punjab telegraphed to Home Secretary, Calcutta on 22nd March, 1872. On behalf of Sikh Sardars, Sardar Dayal Singh Majithia presented this address which stated: "We, the undersigned Sikhs of all classes of Amritsar, beg unanimously to submit that we have no connection or sympathy whatever with the Kuka Sect, which has recently become notorious. On the contrary we greatly differ from them on most religious principles. We are happy, that the government has adopted most appropriate and exellent measures for controlling this wicked and misguided sect, especially as the measures in question are calculated to deter ill-disposed people from committing mis-chief in future, and in the event of any member of this depraved sect committing crime to prevent suspicion falling on people of other sects, as happened in the case of the murder of the butchers at Amritsar. Moreover, the Kukas do not differ from us in religious principles only, but they may be said to be our mortal enemies. Since by their misconduct and evil designs, they injured our honour in the estimation of the government, and well-high levelled with the dust, the services performed in 1857, through which we were regarded as well-

wishers and loyal subjects by the government. But as the proverb says. 'Truth is invulnerable, the government has found out that we had no share in the proceeding of the sect. And regarding the sect, as our enemies, we are thankful to the government for the measures which have been adopted whereby the desires of our hearts have been fulfilled.'[25]

However, the reaction of contemporary newspapers in India was not only qualitatively different from the landed Sikh gentry and priests but also a civilized one. For instance, *The Hindu Patriot* in its issue on 29th January 1872 began with a note of justification in terms of "stability of British power in the East to unite and put down with a strong hand any overt act of disaffection, leaving to calmer moments the consideration of the best means of allaying the discontent which may have seized the popular mind. The Kooka outbreak, which is the latest manifestation of this discontent, shows that the volcano in the Panjab is in a state of ferment." But the newspaper censured the acts of the British officials when it said "We are aware that in dealing with the Kookas we are dealing with a fanatical sect, but we cannot afford to ourselves become savages. Strange to say not a voice has been raised or a line written, as for as we have seen, against this wholesale military execution. Surely there must be some error as to forty-nine men shot down at once, after the suppression of the rebellion. If not then we say that Mr. Cowan will be called upon the public opinon to give some plain and straight forward account of the matter, and why he was present at the time of execution. There is sense of justice and responsibility in the foregoing, which we cannot too highly admire. It indicates the same spirit, which with promptitude the English press on receipt of the melancholy intelligence of the assassination of Chief Justice Norman, demanded in one voice that the trial of Ameer Khan, then under appeal should be conducted with utmost impartiality lest it be for a moment supposed that the suspicion that the murderer was a Wahabi conspirator had tinged the current of British justice."[26]

Briefly speaking, the blowing of the Kuka Sikhs from the guns was not only an arbitrary act against the established legal procedure but also 'repugnant to humanity, and a punishment unfit to be inflicted by civilized men'. The Government of India conceded that it 'cannot admit that any necessity existed in the present case'. Cowan's manner was so unusual and so barbarous'. All who have been unfortunate enough to witness such an execution know that a more horrible and revolting spectacle can hardly be conceived. Cowan was dismissed from the service and Forsyth was transferred to Oudh as Commissioner.

Kukas's attack on butchers and then on Muslim principality where the cow-killing was practice was not the culmination of their emotional outburst. It was the result of their struggle which stood for the restoration of that Khalsa raj in which their religious susceptibilities were honoured. One of the major contributions of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was that he reduced the religious antagonism among the Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs and tried to integrate them with his state. Whereas the British sharpened the communal identities by way of encouraging and patronizing the Muslim and Sikh leaders to establish their respective communal organizations and pursue the programme of constructing religious and cultural identities in the last quarter of 19th century Punjab. The legal structure of the British raj though recognized customs as the laws yet played up with religious susceptibilities. The cow-killing and selling of beef and conversion remained contentious issues throughout the period under raj. There were inherent cultural contradictions between the Khalsa and the British raj. The 'Sant Khalsa' was bound to fight against the latter which legalized the cow killing. Those who were involved in the attack were not ordinary followers of the Namdhari Guru. Among them were his *subas* who were committed to the Namdhari mission. Of course, the Namdhari Guru formally denied his involvement in the violent activities. His concurrence would have justified the ruthlessness of Cowan and Forsyth.[27]

Meanwhile, to ward of further eventuality the government deported the Namdhari Guru and some of his confidants to Burma essentially because the Kukas believed that a time had arrived to rise against the British raj. Some of them sold their land holdings and flocked towards Bhaini Sahib headquarters. His departure created a vacuum of leadership which was filled up when his four years younger brother Budh Singh who became *Sir Karta* (head) of the Namdhari community. According to the Namdhari sources, it was 'Satguru's letter from Burma which asked the members of his family and followers to recognize Budh Singh as his successor. There was a dissent within the family against Budh Singh's succession which was silenced by his brother's letter. Budh Singh now known as Hari Singh (1872-1906) faced a daunting task to carry on the movement which had assumed political overtones.

In the beginning, the Namdhari Guru was not allowed to move outside from his headquarters. Subsequently, through his missionary tours which were undertaken only after the prior permission of the government, he helped his adherents to hold firmly to their beliefs. He took steps for organizing the Namdhari Sikhs.[28] In spite of the strict restrictions put on the Namdhari followers, some of them were able to see their 'Satguru.' They would hide their outer appearance and meet 'Satguru' outside in the fields. Sometimes, they would pose as the guests of relatives of the village Bhaini and in the night they would slip into their 'Satguru's house. Some of them brought gifts for their Guru. According to an abstract of intelligence prepared by the Punjab Police, the Namdhari Guru received 173 visitors at Bahini Sahib during the three weeks (between 12th March to 2nd April 1881), and got from them varying sums totaling Rs. 319/ as offering.[29]

This limited interaction between guru and his followers was perceived as a source of political danger by the police. Even the occasional or casual meetings between him and his followers were interpreted as secret confabulations. For instance, the Deputy Superintendent Police, J.P. Warburton wrote to Colonel, H.N.

Millter, IGP, Punjab on 31st August, 1878 "that I think it is my duty to point out that Kukas were a source of political danger. Although at present they are comparatively few in number, I believe they are increasing as proselytism is actively progressing. Ever since permission has been given for ten Kukas to visit Hari Singh at a time, Kukas from all parts came to Bhaini and put up in the neighborhood and outside at Bhaini. At night meetings presided over by Baba Hari Singh, are occasionally held secretly at a shrine near the village of Lalton in Patiala territory".[30] In April 1880 the DSP-Ludhiania reported, "the Kukas are at present in a state of excitement, they hold frequent consultations and Budh Singh Bhaini is visited by men from distant places".[31]

The abstract of intelligence of the Punjab Police highlighted the Kuka activities within the country during the year 1881. According to this abstract a secret meeting was held by 150 Kukas in the *dhak* jungle near village Lalton (not far of from Bhaini) on 17th March. The police reached the spot and arrested 39 of them who were released on bail. Suba Kahn Singh and Jaimal Singh were arrested and asked to furnish security in the sum of Rs. 1000/each for abusing the policemen at Bhaini. On the 28th March, Gurdas Singh, Khushal Singh and Natha Singh were ordered to furnish security of Rs. 1000 each for one year for their undesirable activities. In the meantime, a message was spread among the Kukas that as 'Satguru' (Ram Singh) willed, they should assemble at Bhaini Sahib and work out at future plans. However, some of them were arrested at the Sahnewal railway station. One of these Kukas was in possession of a 'seditious' letter purportedly written by the Namdhari guru from abroad in 1877. The letter was brought by Naina Singh (of Varyiah) and Bhagwan Singh who belonged to Amritsar District. The arrested Kukas were asked to furnish security of Rs. 1000 each for one year.[32]

That the Namdhari struggle assumed political overtones under Namdhari Guru Hari Singh's leadership is established by the fact that some of his subas and activists carried on their efforts to

spread anti-British propaganda and restoration of the Khalsa raj. The recent collection of documents give comprehensive details of Baba Gurcharn Singh and Baba Bishan Singh's visit to Russia during the late 19th century.[33] The details of Gurcharan Singh's visit to Russia is based upon a letter which he carried on behalf of his 'Satguru' (Ram Singh) to Russian authorities.[34] The content of the letter makes us believe that the massive Kuka followers running into 3,15,000 were ready to rebel against the British under the leadership of their *Satguru* Ram Singh as well as Hari Singh.[35] The letter also mentions the political prophecies of spiritual master Ram Singh about the Russian invasion on India.

Whether Baba Gurcharan Singh had concurrence of his 'Satguru' (Ram Singh) or his successor requires more evidence for corraboration. Similarly, we need more data to agree with Gurcharan Singh's claim that the entire Kuka followers were in the rebellious mood. However, it is fact that the British allies comprising landed gentry and priestly class tried to overblow the Kuka' menace in Punjab province. Nevertheless, the British government was unnerved by the activities of the *subas* as the latter themselves conceded. The British knew the fact that at no stage, the Russians were serious to invade India. The financially and military sources of the Russian government were too limited to allow this adventure.[36]

The Russian government was keen to know the state of affairs prevailing in India. For that reason, it used to cajole the agents /ambassadors of the Indian feudal chiefs and listened their concerns sympathetically but without committing any assurance of military help.[37] As per custom, Gurcharan Singh was too accorded a warm welcome and a robe of honour. Like the Kukas, those Indian chiefs who suffered at the hands of British usually entertained a hope to have an alternative of the British in India. Actually, it was wishful thinking on the part the Kukas that the Russians being the traditional enemy of the British, would attack India. The British Officials outwitted Gurcharan Singh and got the above-mentioned letter. He was arrested and detained in the judicial lock up at

Lahore for interrogation. On the recommendation of the Punjab Government, the British Government of India issued warrants under Regulation III of 1818 against Gurcharan Singh. The specific instructions were given to the Governor- General that Gurcharan Singh was likely to excite the Kukas to some violent manifestation. Therefore, he should better be placed under surveillance at his own village. The Punjab Government detained him at Multan. No trial was held because nothing could be proved against him by the due process of law. Gurcharan Singh was not released till 1886.[38]

Meanwhile, Suba Gurcharan Singh's mission was picked up by another Suba Bishan Singh. A wealthy Arora businessman having agencies in Peshawar, Kabul, Bokhara and Russian territory, he was able to build up relations with the Russian agencies in Central Asia and acted as the medium of communication between them and Namdhari Guru. It is remarkable that Baba Bishan Singh could carry on this dual task of business and political venture successfully from 1880-1888. In the Namdhari literature, Bishan Singh's status and role is exalted to the position of redeemer. In the *Kuka Bara Mah.*[39] (or Cycle of Song), which was recited by Deva Singh of Shahbazpur at the annual Baisakhi fair held at Amritsar in 1884. Bishan Singh was eulogised in the following verse: Bishan Singh, the Guru's precious jewel and martyr, has a large following, has entered into negotiations with those who have expressed readiness to join him.[40]

It is said that Suba Bishan Singh sent several communications to India in 1883 with the contention that the Russians were making warlike preparations and were ready to invade India in 1884-85. According to the report of the District Superintendent Police, Ludhiania he cited such communications which the police obtained from Hira Singh who was Suba Bishan Singh's cousin.[41] The Kuka leaders in Punjab got excited by Bishan Singh's communications and reorganized their followers. Moreover, the people of Punjab were also excited by the circulation of the *Sau-Sakhis* which prophecised the return of the Namdhari Guru from

aboard; of the rise of Muhammadan Chiefs in the North- West of India and the Russian help against the British. The Kuka Sikhs were inspired by the idea of fall of the British rule and of restoration of the Khalsa raj.[42]

The Kuka' struggle synchronized with Maharaja Dalip Singh's proclamation as the sovereign of the Sikh nation. In 1886, he sailed for India and the news of his return generated a great excitement among the Punjabis. There were strong rumours then afloat in the Punjab about prophecies made by Guru Gobind Singh about his returning to Punjab as the Maharaja with perhaps Russian help. The Kukas had particularly pinned their faith in return of Dalip Singh to power as prophesied in a number of *Sakhis*'. One *Sakhi* then current in the Punjab was that Dalip Singh will come to Punjab and rising from the west will take place. The Khalsa will predominate in the east. According to another '*Sakhi*' Kuka Bishan Singh was destined to lead Muhammadan army of liberation in Punjab through the North-Western frontiers of India.[43] The Kuka Sikhs believed that as if Ram Singh's spirit had entered into Dalip Singh. They formed deputation which reached Bombay to greet Maharaja. Since the British apprehended that his arrival could create a trouble in Punjab they detained him at Aden. Finding no way to reach India the Ex- Maharaja moved to Russia in 1887.[44] Meanwhile, rumours were spread in the Punjab that Suba Bishan Singh had joined Dalip Singh in Russia and the Maharaja was working for the Russian assistance to invade Punjab.[45] From Russia, Dalip Singh made appeals to the Sikh Sardars and masses to rise against the British. Meanwhile, Sardar Thakur Singh Sandhanwalia, Dalip Singh's first cousin, was disgruntled with the British as the latter refused to comply with his demand for financial aid. He became so hostile towards raj that he had to quit Punjab. He joined hands with Dalip Singh to dislodge the raj. He took up his residence in Pondicherry and established secret liaison with a number of Sikh regiments serving under the British. It is believed that the rulers of Chamba, Faridkot, Nabha and Kishan Kaur, the

Dowager Rani of Balagarh whose son Nahar Singh was hanged by the British in the 1857 rebellion, had already promised support".[46] Thakaur Singh Sandhanwalia was also in the touch with some Decan chiefs. Moreover, Dalip Singh himself tried to secure the help of deposed King of Oudh and Raja of Indore. He sent two separate letters to these chiefs through his emissary Arur Singh. In Moscow, he sought the help of Czar of Russia and addressed a comprehensive letter to the capital of Russia Czar highlighting the benefits of an alliance between him and Czar.[47]

Kukas' plans to secure aid from other sources came out a futile exercise. The Maharaja of Kashmir recruited the Kuka Sikhs to get a chance of expressing his loyalty to the British. He, at once, dismissed these Kuka Sikhs from his army as soon as the latter wanted. Similarly, the ruler of Nepal had actually no sympathy with the Kuka's cause.[48] Like the Maharaja of Kashmir, he also thought to use Kuka Sikhs as the political lever in dealing with British. The Russians too did not want to annoy the British either by helping the Kuka Sikhs or Dalip Singh. Disillusioned Maharaja left Russia for Europe in 1888 and died in exile in Paris on October 22, 1893. With his death, all plans of organizing anti -British forces were given up.[49]

In the post-Uprising of 1857 period, the circumstances were much less favourable for the anti-British struggle. The Lambardars, Zaildars, Jagirdars and the leading rulers of native States who were largely Sikhs were favourably treated by the British. They were so contented with the British that when ex-Maharaja Dalip Singh proclaimed himself as the sovereign of the Sikh nation in 1887 and asked his fellowmen to rise against the British, they called him a false pretender and proclaimed to the contrary that they would die for their Sovereign Empress and would never accept Dalip Singh as their ruler. Earlier, the Sikh aristocracy and the priestly classes demonstrated their similar loyalty to the British when they prepared a memorandum against the Kukas and submitted to the Lieutenant Governor, in a Darbar held at Amritsar on March 22, 1872.[50]

Among the native rulers, the ruler of State of Patiala since 1872 took every possible measure to eliminate Kukas' menace. He dismissed a number of Kuka Sikhs from the state service and warned that in future, if any person of the state subscribed to the ideology of the Kuka, would be dismissed.[51] Maharaja publically stated that the Kukas' dismissal from the state service was not merely on the ground of the anti- British activities it was also done to the fact that the Kukas also indulged into anti- Sikh religious practices.[52] The rest of the native chiefs felt that the Kuka movement might pose a serious challenge to their political authority. Therefore, they thought that unless firm action was taken against this movement, it could not be suppressed. Kuku guru's name haunted the native chiefs. They asked the Jagirdars, Zamindars and semi- officials to get the Kuka Sikhs arrested. They were richly rewarded with ranks, titles, cash, jewellery, and costly clothes etc.[53]

Moreover, these chiefs and the landed gentry through various representations and memorandum had conveyed their appreciation and support to the British action for suppressing the Kuka Sikhs. They mobilized even public opinion in the support of Cowan and Forsyth who ruthlessly killed Kuka Sikhs. They held a meeting at Jalandhar under the Chairmanship of Sardar Bikram Singh Ahluwalia. A petition was drafted in praise of these British officers. Another memorandum was sent by the Rais of Kalsia. In this memorandum, they highlighted each act of the Kukas towards violence, insurrection and riots. They even said that if Cowan was dismissed and Forsyth was removed from the service, it would have an adverse effect and Kukas would revive again. Another petition of the same kind came from the Rais and Jagirdars of Karnal District. Petitions of similar nature were sent by the Rajas of Rajauri and Bijwara too.[54]

It is surprising that instead of jointly condemning the act of the brutal killings of their native bretherns by the mouth of cannon they supported the act of Cowan and Forsyth. Whereas the British Parliament and Press censured these officials for committing the

uncivilized acts on the other hand, the Native States were so apprehensive of Kukas' behaviour that the *Patwaris* and *Lambardars* were asked to keep a vigilant eye on their activities and write *muchalkas* for the nearest Police Stations whenever some Kukas entered or left the villages. The native courts passed orders for the *nambardars* and *patwaris* holding them responsible for the Kukas in their respective areas.

Briefly speaking, the Namdhari Sikhs resisted the political and cultural hegemony of the British raj. The origin of their resistance can be traced to the formation of Sant Khalsa. The Namdhari Guru held *malechh* Khalsa and British responsible for destroying the Khalsa raj. Hundreds of Sikh *Sardars, Ahalkars, Jagirdars, Lambardars* and *Zamindars* and thousands of Sikh peasants and artisans responded to his ultimate mission of restoring and extending the Khalsa raj to the rest of Hindustan. There were several Sikhs who refused to serve the British raj and became close confidants of the Namdhari Guru. For him and his followers it was divine mission to expel British from the country. Invoking the spirit of Sikh *ardas*, (supplication) that they believed that 'the Khalsa shall reign and the Rajah and ryot shall live in peace and comfort and no one shall molest another'.[55] In these terms, he came out with an alternative polity of the British raj. For motivating and mobilising the Khalsa he invoked Khalsa traditions of protecting poor and helpless and fighting against the tyrants. His followers comprised thousands of discontented agriculturists and artisans. They were popularly called Kukas and ready to lay down their lives for the righteous cause. They perceived their guru as *avtar*-reincarnation of Guru Gobind Singh. In fact, the Namdhari Guru and his followers won over the sympathies of the Sikhs and Hindus irrespective of their religious affiliations over the issue of cow-killing. This issue, as the British rightly apprehended, could broaden the scope of the Namdhari struggle against the British. However, premature confrontration on the issue of cow-killing costed them dearly: 68 Kukas were blown up by the guns and several hanged up summararly; and their guru was deported. Even then their struggle

continued and assumed dangerous overtones when Dalip Singh proclaimed himself the Maharaja of Kingdom of Lahore and was supported by Thakur Singh Sandhawalia. However, the might of the British raj and its allies (landed gentry and priestly classes) was too powerful to allow the *Kukaism* to groom and continue anti-British struggle. The propagation of Singh Sabha ideology had overtaken Kukaism in the last quarter of 19th century.

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12. See Appendix — D
13. Nahar Singh & Kirpal Singh, pp 132-33
14. Ibid. pp 135-138
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16. Harbans Singh (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Vol. III, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1994, p 15, also see Khushwant Singh, pp 81-82.

17. Nahar Singh & Kirpal Singh, pp 6-7; as early as 1860, the British Government had become very suspicious of the activities of Kuka Sikhs. It instructed its intelligence department to gather information about the activities of the Namdhari Sikhs. It is in this context that Captain Millar, Cantonment Magistrate, Jalandhar deputed Gaindah Singh, a Sikh informer to the headquarters of Namdhari Guru. Although Gaindah Singh could not succeed to see Namdhari Guru but was able to take back two papers which were given by the disciples to him. These papers were to be given to the Namdhari Guru. However, Gaindah Singh managed to bring back these papers and handed over to the above mentioned Magistrate.
18. For detail see, K.C. Yadav, "Interpreting 1857: A Case Study", *Rethinking 1857*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 2007, pp 3-21; Piara Singh Padam, *Prachin Sau Sakhi*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2001, p.11; Louis E. Fenech, *Martyrdom in the Sikh Tradition*, Oxford University Press, 2000, pp-. 167-68.
19. Cited by Nahar Singh in *Namdhari Sikhs the Pioneer Freedom Fighters*, (ed. H.S. Hanspal), Namdhari Darbar, Bhaini Sahib, 2006, pp 50-51: we need further information about the antecedents of persons like Kishan Singh Kuka and Kirpal Singh Kuka.
20. Ibid.
21. Such orders had been passed in 1806 and led to a serious mutiny in Vellore.
22. The number of these Kukas vary from 125 to 200, see, Bhai Nahar Singh & Kirpal Singh, p XX; Jaswinder Singh, *Kuka Movement*, Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi; 1985, p VII.
23. A summary narrative of the episode is given in Nahar Singh's *Documents, II*, 57-72. This narrative prepared in the judicial branch represents a collection of all relevant correspondence received upto 8 April. 1872, also see, Nahar Singh and Kirpal Singh, p 189.
24. Nahar Singh & Kirpal Singh, pp 272-73, 378, 385-87
25. Op. Cit. p 378.
26. Op. Cit., pp 385-87.
27. Namdhari Guru and his subas were exiled from Punjab and were taken to Allahabad from where he was transferred to Rangoon and detained under the Bengal Act of 1818. The subas were sentenced to varying terms of sentences. Namdhari Guru was kept in Mergui jail where he, according to jail reports, died in 1885. However, Jaswinder Singh has dug out official correspondence which shows that Namdhari guru's existence even after nine months. According to an official letter, Ram Singh, Kuka is going to be transferred to a more remote spot where communication with him will be less easy." Jaswinder Singh concludes that this belies the story of Guru Ram Singh, death at Mergui.. : *Kuka Movement. Freedom Struggle in Punjab* (Jaswinder Singh) Delhi, 2004, p. 225; According to Namdhari tradition

'Satguru' Ram Singh's letter was read before the congregation and was burnt up lest it could be intercepted by the British officials: Gurmit Singh. *Sant Khalsa*, Usha Institute of Religious Studies, Sirsa, 1978, p 76.

28. For details, see, Jaswinder Singh and Tara Singh Anjan (eds.), *Vad Partap Singh Achraj Roop*, Delhi 1992, pp 61-62.
29. Jaswinder Singh, *Kuka Movement: Documents 1880-1903*, p 63-143; also see, Fauja Singh, pp 139-40.
30. Ibid
31. Ibid
32. Ibid, pp 141-150:
33. Jaswinder Singh, *Kuka Movement: Freedom Struggle in Punjab-Documents 1880-1903*,pp, 95-188
34. Baba Gurcahran Singh's visit to Central Asia is corroborated by the discovery of a document in the Archives of the Uzbeg Soviet Republic as item No. 462 in the consular ponds of the Turkestan governor general it bears the title the ambassador from the priest of the Punjab Sikh arrives in Samarkand (1879), P.C. Roy, Gurcharan Singh mission in Central Asia,' *The Punjab Past and Present* (ed.Ganda Singh),Pbi, University, Patialia,Vol.VIII, April 1974,p207.
35. Jaswinder Singh, *Kuka Movement, Document 1880-1903*,p 108.
36. M.A.Yapp,British Perceptions of the Russian Threat of India, *Modern Asian Studies* Vol, 21, Part IV Cambridge University Press, London 1987,pp 647-665.
37. In November 1862, Tashkent received two representatives from the Maharaja of Kashmir and 1867 there arrived an ambassdor from the Raja of Indore assuring his friendship and help in the event of outbreak of war between England and Russia in late 19th Century in Asia, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol, 21,Pt, IV, Cambridge University Press, London, 1987,pp 639-40.
38. Jaswinder Singh, *Kuka Movement Documents, p* 140.
39. Jaswinder Singh, *Kuka Movement: Documents 1880-1903*, pp 296-308.
40. Ibid, 307, pp 196,307.
41. M.M. Ahluwalia, *Kukas, p* 131.
42. Jaswinder Singh, Documents 1880-1903, pp 289-93; see also, Joginder Singh, *The Sikh Resurgence*, National Book Organisation, New Delhi, 1997, pp 9, 11-14.
43. Baldev Singh (ed.), *Fighter For Freedom: Maharaja Dalip Singh*, National Book Shop, Delhi, 1998, pp 93-94. After his conversion to Christianity, Dalip Singh left India for England in 1854 and was accorded warm welcome by the Royal family particularly by Queen Victoria. In 1860, he came to see his mother Maharani Jind Kaur. Again, he came to India in 1864 to perform the rites of his mother who died on October 18, 1863. On his way back he

married Bamber Muller, the daughter of German Merchant on 7 June 1864 at Alexandria. Meanwhile, he incurred a heavy debt. He made several appeals but the British Government did not restore his private estates after his death. Strained by huge debt, the Ex- Maharaja returned to India. But before sailing he proclaimed himself Maharaja of the Sikh nation in 1887 and also called upon it to rise against the British: Ganda Singh (ed.) *Maharaja Dalip Singh Correspondence*, Punjabi University, Patialia, 1977 PP 83, 90, 95, 105.

44. Ibid, p 104: According to the Paris correspondent of the Daily Chronicle Tribune, June 8, 1887, he went to Russia with the object of seeking permission in the Russian authorities to be allowed to the proceed through the central Asia to the Afgans frontier and also to them to invade India.
45. Joginder Singh, p 10.
46. Baldev Singh (ed.) *Fighter For Freedom: Maharaja Dalip Singh*, pp 93-94.
47. Op.Cit p 97.
48. Percival Spear, *A History of India*, Vol.II, Penguin Books, 1977 pp 153-54.
49. Joginder Singh, p 10.
50. Ibid., pp. 10-11.
51. A parwana was issued of behalf of the Govt. Punjab by the Patialia State about the dismissal of the Kukas: Surjit Kaur Jolly, *Sikh Revivalist Movements*, p. 126.
52. Ibid., p. 121.
53. Nahar Singh, *Documents*- p 121.
54. Ibid, It may be mentioned here that some of Sikh Sardars, Bedis and Sodhis who were signatories of anti-Kuka memorandum were also the founders of the Singh Sabha movement in 1873. The urgency of founding of this movement was felt in the wake of Kuka rebellion (1871-72). Of course there were other factors too which led to its founding. One of the founders was Bikram Singh Ahluwalia. Others were Sardar Thakur Singh Sandhanvalia and Baba Khem Singh Bedi. Bikram Singh (1835-1887) received several honours and distinctions from the British. During the Uprising of 1857, he commanded a Kapurthala contigent of 300 men, horse and foot, and 2 guns to Hoshiarpur. He also assisted in subjugation of Oudh as the head of Kapurthala contigent. He was awarded the title of Sardar Bahadur and large jagir in land with a *khillat*. He was Honorary Magistrate at Jalandhar and in 1879 was appointed Honorary Assistant Commissioner and was decorated with the title of Companion of the Star of India (C.S.I.). He also served as president of the newly created Municipal Board of Jalandhar for a term:" *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Vol.1, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1995, p. 371.

    W.H. McLeod, *Sikhs of the Khalsa: A History of the Khalsa Rahit*, Oxford University. Press, 2005, pp 234-35: *Raj karega khalsa* is the third of three

couplets that Sikhs recite in unison immediately after the conclusion of Ardas.

1. Verily by the order of God the Immortal was the Panth promulgated. It is incumbent upon all the Sikhs to regard the Granth as their Guru.
2. Regard the Granth as the Guru, the manifest body of the Gurus. Those who desire to be united with God may find him in the *Sabda*, the holy Word.
3. The Khalsa shall rule and none will remain defiant: all such shall come into the fold after wandering in humiliation. All who take refuge (in the Panth) shall be protected.

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CHAPTER—III
IN THE NATIONAL STRUGGLE

By the time 'Maharaj' Partap Singh assumed leadership of the Namdhari community in 1906, the Punjabi elites and the print-media began to perceive contradictions between socio-economic interests of the natives and of the alien rulers. Earliest expression of this awareness is found in the propagation of *swadeshi* and boycott of the imported goods. They exhorted the people to wear *swadeshi* which would boost agriculture production and benefit the agriculturists. Moreover, an awareness of economic exploitation by the alien rulers dawned among these elites, when they came to know the functioning of revenue, the excise and taxation and legal structures of the raj. They found that the British appropriated the resources of the agriculturists and impoverished them. Besides, they also found that the people experienced social and racial arrogance of the British officials. The newspapers and periodicals in vernacular languages narrated the cases of insults and humiliations heaped upon the natives by the British officials. In reaction to this behaviour, the natives used these derogatory words for the British officials.[1] Above all, the Punjabi elites realized that the educational and cultural institutions of the raj did not stand for producing better human beings. Lala Lajpat Rai, Ajit Singh and Sufi-Amba Prasad were among those who exposed the exploitative nature of the British raj. Actually, they were protagonists of the Swadeshi movement which was launched by Bal Ganga Dhar Tilak. They espoused the nationalist and patriotic sentiments. They were inspired by Gopal Krishan Gokhle. Lala Lajpat Rai, Ajit Singh and Sufi Amba Prasad took up those issues which affected the agriculturists, traders, bankers, and businessmen. Articulating the dissent of rural and urban people, they launched an agitation against the agrarian legislation which was proposed

by the British. This legislation comprised three Bills: Colonization Bill which was meant for strengthening the administrative control over the canal colonies, Bill raising the water rates in Chenab Colony and Amendment Bill pertained to Land Alienation Act, 1900. This act hit hard the vested interests of the business communities who were prohibited to invest their surplus capital in purchasing the cultivated land. Under the leadership of Lala Lajpat Rai, Ajit Singh and Sufi Amba Prasad, zamindars, students, retired soldiers and professionals in thousands held rallies in the towns of Lahore, Rawalpindi and Sialkot in 1907.

Actually, the agrarian agitation was the manifestation of social and economic sufferings of the agriculturists. The Kuka movement too manifested similar sufferings of the Sikh peasantry in the last quarter of the 19th century. As mentioned elsewhere, the Kukas comprised more than eighty–five percent of the Jat Sikh agriculturists and their number ran into lakhs (more than three lakhs). The Kukas were spread over to the central region of the British Punjab. In the second half of 19th century, the demographic changes resulted into the social discontentment among the agriculturists and non- agriculturists. Their population increased by 16.3 percent. The density of this population was much more in the central tract of this province. The increasing volume of the population started a process of fragmentation of the landholdings of the peasants which further reduced the volume of production particularly in the case of middle order of the peasantry. In the wake of reoccurrence of famines, the agriculturists were forced to borrow money from the money-lenders for performing the social obligations and remitting the land revenue in the cash. The agriculturists borrowed money mortgaging their landholdings. This process resulted into the alienation of the landholdings and indebtedness to the money-lenders. Like their counterparts, the Jat Sikh agriculturists also became victims of this crisis. It was this section of the agriculturists which constituted major followers of the Kuka movement. The rest of the followers were artisan and

menial castes. They suffered socially and economically as they were dependents on the agrarian economy which was in crisis during this period.[2]

It is in this context that Namdhari Guru Ram Singh appeared on the scene. The deprivated Jat Sikh agriculturists and artisans responded to his messianic message which assured a just social order and their own kingdom (Khalsa) free from socio-economic sufferings. As noted elsewhere, the *Sau-Sakhis* and *Kuka Bara Mah* elevated Baba Ram Singh to the status of reincarnation of Guru Gobind Singh.[3] The belligerency of the Kuka agriculturists and artisans in the religious idiom was supplanted by the democratic and secular protest of the agriculturists, retired soldiers and professionals in the beginning of 20th century.

The rise of Ghadar movement underlined the same phenomenon. It is known fact that most of the Ghadar revolutionaries came from the marginalized Sikh peasantry. Some of the Sikh agriculturist families were under huge debt and forced to go abroad to earn their livelihood and pull their respective families out of the financial crisis and raise the social status. More than ten thousand Jat Sikh agriculturists went to Canada and United States. Of the total Ghadar revolutionaries, more than 90% were Sikhs. Nevertheless, the Ghadar revolutionaries, like the Kukas, rejected the British raj because they realised that the rabid racial discrimination, insults and humiliations which they and their fellow-countrymen suffered was due to the fact that they were slaves. They resolved that the liberation from this raj and establishment of their own rule could end their social, cultural, political and economic sufferings.[4] Like the Namdhari Sikhs, the Ghadarities interpreted Sikh religion and history to mobilize people against the British tyranny and oppression. The Ghadarites believed that it was righteous to take sword when situation was past all remedies. The masthead of the Gurmukhi edition of the *Ghadar* revolutionary periodical carried the following injuction of the

first Guru of the Sikhs [5]

Jau tau prem khelan ka chao

Sir dhar tali gali meri aao

(If you have the passion to play the game of love (then) come with the head placed on the palm of your hand).

Strategically, it was very essential to redefine the role of religion and history. As we noted earlier, that the Singh Sabhaites including the Sikh Sardars and *Mahants* and *Pujaris* used Sikh religion and history but for promoting *raj bhagti* and held prayers for the longevity of the British raj. Similarly, they issued *hukamnamas* from the Akal Takhat declaring the Ghadar revolutionaries the fallen Sikhs. In 1872, the Sikh Sardars and *Mahants* and *Pujaris* had played the similar role. They called Kukas the wicked sect and supported the government to crush this sect. Like the Kukas, the Ghadar revolutionaries believed that Sikhism always stood against the tyranny and repression. They frequently referred to the Sikh heroes of 18th century to arouse the martial bravery of the Sikhs. These heroes were Banda Bahadur, Deep Singh, Mehtab Singh, Hari Singh and Phulla Singh. Similarly, they repeatedly used symbols of 'Khalsa' 'Kirpan' and 'Panth' while discussing the current issues. For the Ghadarites, lion and Singh were synonymous terms.[6]

Some of the founders of the Ghadar Party imbibed the Namdhari legacy of patriotism. Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna, President of the party stated that his disliking for the British raj was nurtured by his interaction with the Namdhari leader Baba Kesar Singh Mohawewale and Namdhari congregations called *holas*. It was from them that he imbibed *ishwar-bhagati* and *desh-bhagati*. He learnt that the meditation on the name of God was not a sectarian exercise. He also learnt that a communalist could not become a true follower of God. Under the influence of the Namdhari philosophy, he formed a society called *Prem-Sangat* which comprised Christains, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. The

members of this society sought religious quest. Sohan Singh Bhakna disclosed that he learnt from Baba Kesar Singh that religious meditation alone was not enough for a man to survive. He required bread, clothes and shelter. He and his fellows in thousand went aboard for earning these things.[7]

Baba Kesar Singh, Thathgarh, Amritsar, Vice- President of Ghadar party, was also attached with the Namdhari movement. Baba Jawala Singh, another Ghadarite, imbibed Namdhari life-style. The Ghadarite poets lauded the Kuka–heores and their patriotism. In 21st issues of *Ghadar Gunj*, revolutionary periodical, they wrote the following verse: [8]

Keeta Kukian kath Punjab andar
Ram Singh Bhai Mohri aan ho gae
Bandobast sara unah theek keeta
Ghadar karan de theek saman ho gae
Ram Singh Bhai jalawatan keete
Naal hor vi kai kurban ho gae.
Bache aurtan kai hazar Kuke
Khatar desh de lai lahu lohan ho gae.

Meanwhile, the Namdhari scholars and activists with different social background came to the forefront. Important among these scholars were Baba Chanda Singh, Sant Santokh Singh Bahowal, Baba Kahla Singh, Sant Nidhan Singh (1898-1956), Sant Dhian Singh and Sant Inder Singh Chakarvarti. All these scholars tried to reconstruct the history of the Kuka movement on the premises that it was too the first war of independence in Punjab. The hero of this war was Namdhari Guru Ram Singh. Till yesterday his name was taboo and the community of ardent followers who were treated as criminals. The law and police were against them, and they were hunted and hounded from house to house and from village to village like members of the criminal tribe. Moreover, they were ostracized by the Sikh leaders and

intellectuals attached with the Singh Sabhas, Diwans and Chief Khalsa Diwan. These leaders and intellectuals marginalized the role of the Kukas in the national struggle. However, the Namdhari scholars interpreted the Sikh scriptures and history situating the Namdhari Gurus and martyrs as the true protagonists of Sikhism, the *Mahants* and *Pujaris* as the allies of the British raj and the betrayal of the contemporary Sikh Sardars. They also created progressive literature imbibing the influence of left- wing ideology. They projected Namdhari Guru Ram Singh and Sant Khalsa as the protagonists of socialism.[9]

The Namdhari Sikhs resolved to resurrect their image and shake off the British surveillance particularly at Bhaini Sahib where a police post has been set. They launched a campaign for the removal of this post and organized conferences to explain the undesirability of the official surveillance. Some of these conferences were organized in Hoshiarpur Distict.[10] The British were willing to review their policy towards the Namdhari Sikhs provided the latter could extend their help to British in the War-efforts. Actually, the British were in crisis when the First World War broke out. They also sought the cooperation of Indian political parties and their old allies comprising landed gentry and priestly class. All of them extended their help but for different reasons. The political parties like the Indian National Congress expected that the British would concede the political and constitutional demands which were articulated by the Home Rule movement.[11] Since the allies were beneficiaries of the raj, it was their moral obligation to cooperate and extend help to the British. They raised funds for the war loans and provided recruits for the British army.[12] However, the Namdhari Sikhs were the protagonists of the anti-British imperialism. Namdhari Guru Partap Singh declined to help the British on this account. He asserted that there was no compatibility of relationship between the Kuka Sikhs and the government. He disclosed that during the First World War, the Deputy Commissioner (Ludhiana) approached him and asked to

provide recruits which he declined on the ground that he and his followers were not allies of the government. Therefore, they were not committed to extend help to the British in any form. He further told the Deputy Commissioner that the Kukas were not beneficiaries of the raj rather they suffered considerably. However, he admitted that the British officials forced him to pay some amount towards the War fund.[13] Inspite of this, the official surveillance and harassment continued for the time being.

The Jallianwala Bagh tragedy left a deep impact on Maharaj Nihal Singh and Maharaj Gurdial Singh, brothers of Namdhari Guru Partap Singh. They were witness to this barbaric tragedy. They realized that in terms of imposing hegemonic and hedonistic aspirations, the rulers did not discriminate their subject. Whosoever challenged their authority and refused submission, the alien rulers behaved ruthlessly. The Jallianwala Bagh tragedy was the reenactment of the Kuka tragedy of 1872. In this tragedy more than sixty-six Kukas were blown up by the guns. The same racial psychy of rulers worked towards the Indians since then. The only difference was that the tragedy of 1872 was justified by the allies of the raj whereas there was powerful class of patriots and nationalists in early 20th century who seriously questioned the moral authority of the raj to rule India. Maharaj Nihal Singh and Gurdial Singh had established rapport with nationalists like Kitchleu and Satypal, two prominent leaders of Amritsar.[14] Asgar Ali, the Deputy Commissioner of Ludhiania, summoned the Namdhari leaders to his office and warned them of the serious consequences if they did not stop their anti-British activities. In fact, the British used force as well as pursuation to weaken the rising tide of its opposition. Nevertheless, undeterred by the British tactics, second generation of the Namdharis began to join national mainstream and responded to the Non-Cooperation movement with zeal. They themselves claimed to be the original harbingers of this movement. They imagined and advocated that it was their guru who exhorted them to boycott the raj and its socio-cultural

institutions. They also realized that it was their moral obligation to support the anti-British movements. Their periodical *Kuka* published articles to substantiate their sentiments.[15] Sant Nidhan Singh, a close associate of Namdhari Guru, made sentimental appeals to the Namdhari Sikhs to keep alive their legacy of patriotism and enroll themselves as Congress volunteers to carry on the Non-Cooperation movement. He regretted disunity and factionalism among the Indians. He was sad to know the absence of sentiments of protecting the honour of the countrymen which weakened the struggle for independence. On the other hand, the Khan Bahadurs and Sardar Bahadurs, the allies of the raj, gave unconditional support to the British officials who dared to commit Jallianwala Bagh tragedy without feeling its guilty.[16]

Meanwhile, the Namdhari leadership, though late, realized the relevance of journalism and founded its own weekly newspaper entitled *Satjug* from Lahore in March 1920. It was registered on 26 May in the same year.[17]

The relevance of journalism dawned on them when they found that without its own newspaper no community could submit its problems and grievances to the government. Nor problems and grievances be brought to the notice of the countrymen or world around. They further realized that the media played an important role in building up public opinion. It was only the public pressure that fixed up the government and forced it to mend its policy towards the people. They further realised that each community should have its own print-media to project its image in the world around. The success and failure of any community was determined by the type of role its media could play. Nirankar Singh Chetan, editor *Satjug*, dedicated this Gurmukhi weekly to the service of the Namdhari community and country. According to him, the *Satjug* aimed to address: (a) the concerns and problems of the people and bring the same to the notice of the government, (b) censure those policies and programmes of the government which could affect the countrymen adversely, (c) promote communal

harmony and unity, (d) advocate the opening of *pathshalas* (schools) for dispelling ignorance and (e) accelerate struggle for achieving *swaraj*.[18]

However, the immediate concern of *Satjug* was to mobilize public opinion and build up pressure on the Punjab Government to lift the police-post from the Bhaini Sahib headquarters. Through its editorial notes and resolutions passed by the Namdhari and non-Namdhari organizations, the newspaper highlighted injustice done to the Namdhari Sikhs in this context. It also underlined the futility to keep such police surveillance when the vigorous communitarian national and the revolutionary movements (the Akali and Babbar Akali and Non-Cooperation movements) were going on since 1919.[19] Expressing patriotic sentiments, Gaini Kala Singh wrote poem entitled *Kuka Singh Ate Angrej Jaat* which was published in 1922. For him the Kuka struggle was actually the struggle for country's independence. The Kuka Singhs were real Singhs who practiced *gurbani* whereas Sodhis, Bedis and native rulers were imposters and supported the British which committed excesses on the people.[20] The *Satjug* published statements and resolutions of the national leaders in regard to the Non-Violent Non-Cooperation movement. First the British banned its circulation among the soldiers and then proscribed it when it consistently articulated anti-British sentiments.[21]

In 1923 Bishan Singh published a book entitled *Inqlabi Kuka* (A Kuka Revolutionary). He contextualized the Kuka movement and asserted that it was for the liberation of the country. He recalled memories of the Kuka Subas and leaders like Gian Singh, Giani Rattan Singh and Hira Singh who laid down their lives for liberating the Hindustan. Bishan Singh was more vocal in demanding the complete freedom. However, the Kuka's source of provocation against the *firangee* remained the cow- slaughter.[22]

The founders of *Satjug* couldn't excuse Sir Michael O' Dwyer, the Lt. Governor and General R.E.H Dyer for committing

heinous crime against the humanity on 13 April 1919. Exposing the double standards of Lt, Governor, the editor *Satjug* wrote that he and his colleagues called themselves the protagonists of liberty and freedom but infringed upon the democratic rights of the Indians. These arrogant *sahibs* banned the holding of processions and conferences, imposed Martial Law and humiliated and tortured the people who dared to raise their voice in Kasur, Chuhad Kana, Shiekhupur, Lyallpur, Gujranwala and Amritsar. The British bureaucracy committed excesses in the name of restoring law and order. It also looted the people in the name of delivering justice. The British bureaucracy treated the Indians as the feudal lords treated their slaves. Adding salt to the injuries of the Indian sentiments; the Viceroy exonerated bureaucracy which committed excess on the people during the Martial regime.[23]

Advocating the programme of the Non-Cooperation movement, *Satjug* asked the people to boycott the imported goods and use of those articles which were manufactured locally. It also asked the people to boycott the British courts and settle their suits in the *panchayats*. Moreover, it advocated to shun that type of education which made people dependents on the government services. For the Namdhari Sikhs, the government service implied slavery. Above all, the *Satjug* advocated that since the Non-Cooperation movement was actually started by *Satguru* Ram Singh, the Namdhari Sikhs were morally bound to carry on this movement.[24] Maharaj Gurdial Singh and Sant Nidhan Singh Alam participated in the political conferences organized by the Congress and were members of its committee which drafted resolutions. In one of such resolutions, Sant Nidhan Singh Alam argued that only those people could take the credit of promoting *swaraj* who themselves participated in the bonefire of imported clothes.[25] Sardul Singh Kavishar, a young Congress Sikh leader, was first to recognize Namdhari Guru Ram Singh as the founder 'sardar' of Non-Cooperation and Swadeshi movements. Subsequently, Babu Rajinder Prasad, Jawaharlal Nehru and Subash Chander Bose

also appreciated these movements launched by Namdhari Guru Ram Singh. As early as 1921, Kavishar argued that let 'Hindi' brothers remembered the fact that in the political area 'Baba Ram Singh was the first Punjabi non-cooperator.' When Baba Ji came to realize the evil nature of alien-rulers he launched campaign against it in full swing.

For the time being, the religio-political differences between the Namdhari Sikhs and the Akalis were narrowed down when the latter pleaded with the government to remove police-post from Bhaini Sahib headquarters. Expressing such sentiments, the *Akali* newspaper regretted that the police was harassing the Namdhari Sikhs especially the Namdhari women who performed *nam-simran* at their Dharamsalas under police surveillance. The *Akali* further regretted that the police-men noted down the names of Namdharis who assembled at their Dharamsalas at Amritsar and Lahore. The newspaper expected that a Sikh member of the Punjab Legislative Council should take up this issue.[26] The Namdhari Sikhs too expressed their sympathy with the *Akali Jathas* who were mercilessly beaten up by the police during the Guru-ka-Bagh morcha. The *Kuka*, spokesman of the Namdhari community, often expressed its strong reservations to support the Gurdwara Reform Movement.[27] However, Akalis' resolve to support the Non-Cooperation movement further narrowed down religio-political differences. The Akalis, Congress and Namdhari Sikhs espoused *Sawaraj*. To make Non-Cooperation movement a success, the Congress leaders made passionate appeals to the people to sink their mutual differences and unite against the British raj. The local Congress leaders took initiative in this regard and tried to resolve dispute between the Namdhari and the Akali activists.[28] However, it was the removal of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh from his State of Nabha by the British in 1923 which gave a common issue to the Akalis and Namdharis to fight back injustice done to Maharaja. Unlike other native rulers, Maharaja was a Gur Sikh. According to the Namdhari writings, Maharaja became Namdhari

when a son was born to him with the blessings of their 'Satguru' Partap Singh.[29] The Maharaja was sympathetic to the nationalists and patriots. Some patriots took shelter in his state when they were chased by the British police. Moreover, Maharaja supported the Gurdwara Reform movement. He had some contacts with the national leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru. However, it was an acrimonious dispute between him and Maharaja Bhupindra Singh of Patiala for which the British constituted an enquiry committee. The committee held Maharaja Ripudaman Singh guilty of transgressions. The British forced him to abdicate his throne voluntarily. On 7 July 1923, the British formally disposed him of and sent him to Dehra Dun on an annual pension of Rs 300,000. His expulsion led to a strong popular protest. In a series of demonstrations, the people including Namdhari Sikhs demanded his restoration. The Akalis launched Jaito *morcha*. However, the government remained adamant and removed him from Dehra Dun to KodaiKanal in far of south India in 1926. His pension was reduced to Rs 1, 20, 000.[30] Subsequently, expressing sympathy with Maharaja in 1937, the *Satjug* wrote that Maharaja had gone through the tribulations for the fourteen years and argued that even the criminal was released after completing fourteen years of imprisonment. The *Satjug* called the British callous as they ignored Maharaja's sufferings.[31]

The actual rapport between the Namdhari Sikhs and Congress established during the Non- Cooperation movement was further strengthened when Maharaj Nihal Singh, the younger brother of Namdhari Guru Partap Singh, resolved to attend the Lahore Congress session. He led a *jatha* of few hundred Namdharis and joined the Congress procession. Mata Jiwan Kaur, mother of Namdhari Guru Partap Singh, also took part in this session. She was incharge of the community kitchen which served food to the delegates.[32] The *Satjug* self-congratulated itself by saying that the Namdhari Sikhs' participation in this session saved the image of the Sikh community in the wake of boycott threat of Akali leader

Baba Kharak Singh.[33] However, the fact is that the Akalis did participate in the proceedings of this session when the Congress leadership conceded Baba Kharak Singh's demand of inclusion of Sikh colour in the national flag and resolution of *Puran Swaraj*. Baba Kharak Singh raised the issue of 'Sikh colour' in the national flag under the impression that the three colours of the Congress flag represented Hindus, Muslims and the minorities in general. Baba Kharak Singh was keen to have the Sikhs separately represented in the flag. At that time, the Sikhs asserted their distinct identity and demanded adequate share in the power-structure. For Baba Kharak Singh, it was a question of honour and self-respect of the Sikh community. The Punjab Congress appreciated the Sikh aspirations and recommended the inclusion of Sikh colour in the Congress flag. However, Congress leaders like Mahatama Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru expressed their strong reservations and advocated that the Congress flag did not carry any religious or communal convocation. It was a national flag.[34]

Meanwhile, the Namdhari Sikhs subscribed to the political programme of the Congress. In 1930 Nihal Singh was appointed as the 'Dictator' of the programme of Civil Disobedience movement which was to be carried on in the Punjab. Nihal Singh's appointment as Dictator was an important step towards Namdhari-Congress rapport. Maharaj Nihal Singh, along with a few Kukas, courted arrest during the course of Civil Disobedience movement.[35] The Namdhari activists also formed the Kuka Congress Dal to take part in the Congress movement against the British.[36]

The sectarian outlook of the Namdhari Sikhs was further broadened when they reiterated their commitment to the national struggle on the occasion of remembering the Kuka martyrs of the Malerkotla incident. In that incident sixty-six Kuka-Sikhs were blown up on account of their attack on the Muslim State of Malerkotla. They organized a conference which was attended by the Hindu and Muslim leaders. In the wake of the Civil

Disobedience movement, the Namdhari Guru and his close associates appreciated the communal solidarity among the Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims. The Muslims were as good citizens as the Sikhs and Hindus were.

In 1930s, the Indian revolutionaries and nationalists began to appreciate the contribution of the Namdhari Sikhs to the anti-imperialist struggle which was first launched in Punjab in the last quarter of 19th century. "Bhagat Singh, the beau ideal of the revolutionary movement in this country, certainly attached considerable significance to the Kuka happenings which may quite possibly be traceable to his grandfather and his brother Arjun Singh and Surjan Singh".[37] Bhagat Singh believed that the Kuka movement was the first rebellion in Punjab against the British. He also believed that Baba Ram Singh was the harbinger of the Non-Cooperation movement. As early as 1928 Bhagat Singh stated that "In Punjab, first freedom struggle was started with the initiation of the Kuka movement. If we look into the details of the movement it was very important political movement to oust the Britishers from India, also first one and the only movement against the British empire in Punjab during the second half of the nineteenth century.[38]

Subsequently, the Congress leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Rajinder Prasad visited Bhaini Sahib headquarters and eulogized the sacrifices made by the Kuka Sikhs during the Kuka movement.

In the wake of recognition of the Namdhari Sikhs of 19th Century Punjab as patriots and freedom fighters by the Indian revolutionaries and nationalists, the propagation of the concepts of non-cooperation and *swadeshi* by these Sikhs also got recognition. To begin with the first preposition, the Punjabi writers like Avtar Singh Azad, Vidhata Singh Tir, Lala Dhani Ram Chatrik, Niranjan Singh Talib, Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid and Gurbax Singh Preet Lari had no hesitation in recognizing and appreciating Baba

Ram Singh and Kuka Sikhs as martyr who laid down their lives for the cause of 'Indian Independence'. Avtar Singh Azad wrote a comprehensive article entitled *Namdhari Shadeedan De Samachar Unah de Katlan Di Ton* in 1935 for the Basant Ank of *Satjug*. He paid tribute to Baba Ram Singh as the saviour of Sikh religion, a man who revived the lost glory of Sikhism and inculcated the religious spirit among the Sikhs. Master Tara Singh, the prominent Akali leader, too paid tribute to Baba Ram Singh in these terms but declared him *sarrian da sajnha* Baba Ram Singh. Master Tara Singh also stated that Baba Ram Singh launched Non-Cooperation movement and taught the Sikhs a first lesson in patriotism. Master also reiterated the fact that those persons who declared Indian patriots of 1914-15 as non-Sikhs were the same people who failed to appreciate the aim of Baba Ram Singh and destroyed the Namdhari movement. However, such was the pervasive influence of ideology of non-violence that the writers and political leaders perceived Baba Ram Singh as the harbinger of this ideology. Avtar Singh Azad went a step further when he declared that there was no space for an armed rebellion in the programme of Baba Ram Singh. The patriotism and scarifies of Baba Ram Singh and his Kuka followers got recognition outside Punjab. Professor Gurmukh Nihal Singh, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi perceived Baba as the revivalist of Sikhism who rejected western cultural institutions and exhorted the Sikhs to follow traditional mode of life. As early as 1935, Babu Rajinder paid homage to Namdhari Guru Ram Singh as the first harbinger of Non-Cooperation and Swadeshi movements. He was also remembered as the reincarnation of God who, if once again he could come to this world, would liberate people from communal fire.[39]

The liberal outlook of the Namdhari mission became more perceptible when the Namdhari leadership responded to the problems of the Punjab peasantry which were articulated by the left-wing organizations like the Kirti Kisan Party and Punjab Kisan Sabha. The former Party was organized by Bhai Santokh

Singh and some other ex-Ghadraites who had been released from jail. The Kirti Kisan Party was attached to the Communist International and aimed at to bring about a new awakening among the workers, peasants and intelligentsia by the Marxist ideas. The Kirti Kisan Party "launched agitation such as abolition of *nazrana* and reduction in land revenue, water tax and the like. It was successful in organizing a strong peasant movement in the state on the basis of these demands. In this process, it extended the freedom movement to the villages and helped the Congress to penetrate in the rural areas".[40] When the Kirti Kisan Party was declared illegal by the government, the Kisan Sabha came into being in 1936. The problems of the peasants were also taken up by the Congress Socialist Party which had the support of the Communists.[41]

The Namdhari periodical *Satjug* took note of the Punjab economy and the false claims made by the then the Unionist Party in regarded to the problem faced by the peasants. In 1930s, the Unionists organized several Conferences of the Zamindars in the Punjab. The *Satjug* exposed the agrarian policy of the Punjab Government. It gave the statistics of increasing volume of land revenue in Punjab. The periodical stated that in recent times, the volume of land revenue had increased to the tune of 30 to 40 percent. In 1922, the volume of land revenue paid by the peasants was Rs 5 crore 54 Lakhs. It increased to 7 crore 37 lakhs in 1938. Moreover, the periodical gave coverage to the peasant agitations. According to its information, thirty to forty thousands of peasants participated in processions held in Amritsar and Lahore in 1938. The peasants demanded an improvisation in the system of distribution of canal water. The peasants also demanded a reduction in the land revenue. The periodical condemned the ruthless lathi-charge on the peasant *satyagrahis*. Commenting on the government policy, the periodical stated that its repression had exposed its false sympathy with the peasants. The *Satjug* quoted the agrarian Acts passed by the government in this context. Above all, the

Satjug argued that the recent *Act Intkal Arazi* was intended to divide the people into agriculturists and non-agriculturists. The latter category of the people was discriminated by the government for disallowing to invest its capital in the land. According to the editor, all the mortgaged land will be freed and given to the agriculturists. Moreover, the act imposed several restrictions on the money-lenders. The latter were asked to obtain licenses from the government. The periodical expressed its serious concern over the indifferent attitude of the Sikh and Hindu MLAs when the bill was debated. The *Satjug* found the *Act Intkal Arazi* as anti-Hindus and Sikhs since traders and businessmen largely came from them.[42]

In the wake of common threat from the Muslim majority in the Punjab polity, the various factions of the Sikh organizations made some efforts to unite themselves and try to undo the Communal Award but failed. Then Namdhari Guru Partap Singh made an attempt to bring the leaders of different Sikh sects on the common platform and organized a conference known as Guru Nanak Nam Leva Sarb Samperdai Conference at Bhaini Sahib in 1934. Thousands of Akalis, Nirmalas, Udasis, Sewa Panthis, Nihangs and Adan Shahis were invited to this Conference. The representatives of the Chief Khalsa Diwan, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhank Committee, Shiromani Akali Dal and Central Akali Dal were special invitees. Sant Inder Singh Chakarvarti, Chairman of the Reception Committee, told the audience that it was the desire of His Holiness Maharaj Partap Singh that the religious differences among the different Sikh sects must be resolved. Bhai Arjan Singh of Bagrian family and President of the Conference stressed on the need of mutual cooperation. In the end, some resolutions were passed to resolve the cases of management of the historical gurdwaras, appointment of *granthis* and missionaries and propagation of *gurbani*. Subsequently, the Guru Nanak Sarab Samperdai Conference was also organized at Majitha House, Amritsar in 1942. The Conference wanted to promote communal solidarity.

The Namdhari scholars and activists believed that the communal solidarity among the Sikhs could only be achieved if the Shiromani Akali Dal and the Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee could give up its claims that they were the sole spokesmen of the Sikhs and Sikhism. The Namdhari scholars further argued that the communal solidarity could also be attained if the S.G.P.C. gave up its agenda to amend or change any *maryada* which had been observed by the Sikhs for several centuries. In 1942, a sub-committee of the S.G.P.C. recommended that the *sadharan* or *akhand path* of *Dasam Granth* be discontinued. The S.G.P.C. adopted this recommendation without seeking the suggestions of the Sikh sects. For the Namdhari Sikhs it was a dictorial attitude of the S.G.P.C. Since the Namdhari Sikhs had been treating the *Dasam Granth* a *bani* and recited some of its compositions daily. They described such resolution of S.G.P.C. as an intervention in the Namdhari *maryada*. Moreover, they found that this resolution was contrary to the resolutions passed by the fourth Guru Nanak Sarab Sampardai Conference which was held on 7 November 1942. Infact, the Namdhari Sikhs wanted that the Akali Sikhs and their institutions should respect the beliefs and practices of the Namdhari Sikhs. Whereas the Shiromani Akali Dal and the S.G.P.C. could not oblige the Namdhari Sikhs particularly on the issue of *deh-dhari guru*.[43]

The communal solidarity between the Akali and the Namdhari Sikhs remained fragile on the practice of Sikh maryada. The recitation of *bani* from the *Adi-Granth* was an integral part of the Namdhari faith. They observed this *maryada* since the beginning of the Namdhari mission scrupulously. They performed *akhand paths* in series on several occasions. However, *pattra-path* (page reading) was their novelty. Accordingly, they read pages of the *Adi-Granth* which were unbounded. Such mode of reading *bani* spread like a wild fire. The several local Sikh sangats and S.P.G.C., and Sikh newspapers like the *Khalsa Sahachar* and *Sher-e-Punjab* took a serious note of this act of the Namdhari

Sikhs and condemned it. Some of the Sikh organizations advocated strong action against the Namdhari Sikhs. A Sarab Hind Akali Conference was convened at Ludhiana on 21-23 February 1941 and formed an action committee comprising five members namely Baba Kharak Singh, Bhai Bhagwan Singh, Akali Kaur Singh and Bhai Visakha Singh. The Conference resolved that '*Pattra Path* was an act of religious sacrilege committed by the Namdhari Sikhs'.[44]

The SGPC held its annual meeting in the Teja Singh Samundari Hall, Amritsar on 26 October 1941. The members lost their tempers when they heard that the Namdhari Sikhs tore of the pages of *Guru Granth* for reading them individually. Giani Sher Singh, blind Akali leader, condemned the sacrilegious act of the Namdhari Sikhs and went to the extent of suggesting that there should be a boycott of the Namdhari Sikhs. Others too expressed their similar sentiments. However, Giani Kartar Singh MLA stressed on the need of communal harmony and informed the house that Atma Singh, General Secretary of the Namdhari sect had already tendered an apology at Rawalpindi. The latter also explained that no page of sacred book was torn of. Amar Singh, the *Shere-e-Punjab*, said that whatever the differences may be, desecration of the *Granth Sahib* could not be tolerated. He criticized the policy of the Akalis in this case. Master Tara Singh, however, succeeded in cooling down the tempers of the members of the S.G.P.C. The general meeting adopted the resolution moved by Gaini Kartar Singh by 80 votes to 8 describing such mode of reading contrary to the tenents of the Sikh faith. However, it dropped further action against the Namdhari Sikhs in the view of the assurances given by their leaders. Gauging the seriousness of the *Pattra Path* crisis, the Namdhari Guru intervened and tried to ausage the emotional tension between the Namdhari Sikhs and above mentioned Sikhs. He issued the edict to the Namdhari congregation to stop this mode of recitation in future. His order was complied with by the congregation and matter came to an end in the following years.[45]

The Namdhari Sikhs were ready to play their role in the politics of protection of the Sikh communitarian interests. But they were discouraged by the existing religious differences. Like their counterparts, the Namdhari Sikhs too felt a serious political threat from the Communal Award which was incorporated in the Act of 1935. The Communal Award gave eighty eight seats to the Muslims; fourty four to the Hindus and thirty three to the Sikhs.[46] Thus even the combined strength of the Hindu and Sikh Legislative Councilors could not stop the Muslims in getting any piece of legislation passed. Moreover, the factional politics of the Sikh parties further weakened the communal unity and strength of the Sikhs. Expressing its concern over the communal hegemony of the Muslims in the Punjab politics, the *Satjug* noted that the Sikhs had been enslaved to the Muslim raj.[47]

The Namdhari Sikhs also showed their solidarity on the issue of Gurdwara Shahid Ganj. For them, Muslim justification for declaring this gurdwara as an original mosque was nothing but an act of majoritarian hegemony and infringement upon the religious rights of the minority community. Without naming the Muslim political parties, the *Satjug* noted with regret the policy of communal provocation.[48]

The Namdhari Sikhs expressed their serious concerns over the increasing communal strength of the All India Muslim league under the leadership of Muhmmad Ali Jinnah towards the end of 1930 decade. As we know Jinnah had returned to the Indian politics with determination to make Muslim League real and only spokesman of the Muslims in India. He was also determined to expose the Hindu communalism in the agenda of the Congress.[49] The *Satjug* analysed the speeches made by Jinnah on different occasions and came to the conclusion that he was determined to destroy the Indian Congress. The periodical commented that singing of *Bande Matram* in the Congress ruled States could in no way endanger Islam as alleged by the Muslim Leauge. At the same time, the *Satjug* saw fissiparious ideology of

the Muslim league which could threaten the Indian unity. The periodical was not happy with the Congress policy of appeasing Jinnah and his league in 1938. This policy, *Satjug* apprehended, would alienate the Hindus from Congress. The *Satjug* perceived the demands of the Muslim League as if Muslim rule was going to be established. Simultaneously, the periodical addressed Mahatama Gandhi and Congress leaders as the Hindu leaders who inadvertently talked of the Hindu raj.[50]

The Namdhari Sikhs' identification with Hinduism and Hindu Rashtra led them to believe that the Muslims under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah were determined to establish Muslim Raj in India. The *Satjug* analyzed the speeches made by Jinnah on different occasions and came to the conclusion that Jinnah was determined to destroy Indian unity.[51] In fact, *Satjug* reiterated RSS doctrine codified by M.S. Golwalkar who "declared that if the minority demands were accepted, 'Hindu National life runs the risk of being shattered".[52] Golwalker perceived the Muslims as 'inveterate enemies' and wrote that the 'Hindus were at war with at once with the Muslims on the one hand and British on the other'.[53]

The Namdhari Sikhs appreciated Hindu ideologists and their sacrifices for liberating country from the British rule. Among them was Vir Savarkar who was great patriot. The *Satjug* asked the Namdhari Sikhs to accord a warm welcome to Savarkar on his visit to Punjab on 12 May 1938. Savarkar addressed the Sikh gathering in Ram Bagh, Amritsar on 12 May 1938 and stated that the Sikhs were sons of Guru Gobind Singh and he himself was son of Shivaji. The Hindus and Sikhs were inseparable 'cousins' who liberated India from the Muslim rule. Referring to the case of Shahid Ganj Gurdwara, he said that the Marathas were keen supporters of the agitation. If need be, he himself would lead a Jatha of one thousand Marathas. He warned the Muslims saying that if they destroyed this gurdwara, they will have to construct temples and hand over them to the Hindus which the Muslims

destroyed in the past.[54] It may be pointed out here that it was in 1937 that Savarkar was elected President of the Hindu Mahasabha. He used "occasion of his presidential address in 1937 and then in 1938 to become the first Indian to pronounce that 'there are two nations in the main: the Hindus and the Moslems in India', pre-dating Jinnah's 1939 statement of the two nation-theory.[55] As early as 1939, neither the Akali Sikhs nor the Namdhari Sikhs could grasp the implication of this theory. The concept of Hindu Rashtra actually denied the distinct religious and cultural identify of the Sikhs. The ideologists of Hindu Mahasabha and Rashtaryia Swayam Sevak Sangh perceived the Sikhs and Sikh sects as the integral parts of Hinduism. The Namdhari Sikhs did not contest the ideological ramifications of the concepts of Hinduism and Hindu *Rashtra* as advocated by the Hindu fundamentalist organization. Nevertheless, the threat of the Muslim communalism was so pervasive that it was not Savarkar but Jinnah who appeared sole enemy of the Indian-unity. It was for this reason that the Namdhari Sikhs, like their counterparts, called Savarkar, a great patriot.

The Sikhs (including the Namdharis) and the Hindus came more closer with each others in the wake of Lahore resolution passed by the All India Muslim League in 1940. The resolution stated "that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or be acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principal, namely, the geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial adjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as the Northwestern and Eastern Zones of India should be grouped to constitute 'Independent states,' in which the constituent units should be autonomous and sovereign." Disturbed over the implication of this resolution, the Hindus and the Sikhs organised their joint conferences in the important towns like Amritsar and Lahore. Master Tara Singh and Dr. Gokal Chand Narang were

authorized to form a working committee of these conferences for drafting resolutions. Namdhari Guru Partap Singh was special invitee to these conferences. Emphasizing the Hindu-Sikh unity, he said that those who preached separatism between Hindus and the Sikhs did neither understand Hinduism nor Sikhism. The division between the Hindus and the Sikhs was created to suit the politics of colonial government. "He pointed out that how the great Gurus stood for the protection of the Brahmins and the cow; the learned and the meak; and how the Sikhs and Hindus were the products of the one culture and one civilization. There may be a difference here or there in the customs but essentially and basically their rites and customs were the same".[56] In the wake of scheme of Pakistan, Namdhari Guru Partap Singh floated the idea of holding Sikh-Hindu Sangathan Conference in 1943 at Bhaini Sahib. Namdhari Guru saw a scope of uniting Sikhs and Hindus as they shared cultural heritage. He believed that an alliance between Sikhs and Hindus was essential in the phase of threat posed by the scheme.[57] However, for some reasons, the idea of uniting Hindus and the Sikhs did not materialize. At the most, Namdhari Guru's confidants Nidhan Singh Alam and Inder Singh Chakarvarti wrote articles in *Satjug* to expose the non-viability of this scheme.

The Namdhari Sikhs supported the Congress for launching a struggle for complete independence during the World War-II. The periodical of the Namdhari Sikhs, the *Satjug*, justified the Congress for launching the Quit India movement. The government did not agree to the Congress demand declaring India as an independent country after the end of the World War-II. Nidhan Singh Alam argued that the British government was unjustified in letting lose repression on the Congress workers and putting the Congress leaders behind the bars. He further held government responsible for the damages done to the public property and shutting down the industrial units. Alam regretted that the British did not listen to the sane voice of Mahatama Gandhi whose non-

violent *satya grahya* could save the government and the Congress from the crisis of dead lock.[58]

In the post-World War II period, the Namdhari Sikhs were committed to the national politics of the Indian National Congress. Namdhari Guru Partap Singh reiterated the commitment of the Namdhari Sikhs to the unity and integrity of India. He expressed his serious concern over the danger of communalism for perpetuating differences among the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. Sant Nidhan Singh Alam, President of the Namdhari Darbar, Bhaini Sahib, Ludhiana, described Jinnah's scheme of Pakistan, a devilish which intended to disintegrate Indian territorial unity. Like Mahatama Gandhi's cliche i.e. Pakistan would be formed over my dead body, Alam too said that the territorial divisions of India shall be done over the dead bodies of the Namdhari Sikhs. Nevertheless, ambivalent attitude of the Congress towards the separatist politics of the Muslim league and its failure to fight back the communal violence created a sense of insecurity among the Namdhari Sikhs. Like their coreligionists, they emphasized on the Hindu-Sikh unity. Moreover, in the wake of the proposals of the Cabinet Mission in May 1946, the Namdhari Sikhs were forced to join hands with the Akali Sikhs. The latter formed the Panthic Pratinidhi Board and gave representation to the main Sikh associations. The Namdhari Sikhs were represented by their guru on this board. Nevertheless, the Namdhari Sikhs did not actively participate in the Akali-Congress confabulations. The Congress gave assurances to the Akali Sikhs for protecting the rights of minorities and in that response they joined the Constituent Assembly. The mounting violence in Punjab forced the Akali Sikhs and Hindus to accept partition of Punjab. The Namdhari Guru too accepted the partition. He was concerned about the safety of his followers and exhorted them to leave the west Punjab and cross river Ravi before the holocaust took place in 1947.

Briefly speaking, the Namdhari leadership succeeded in building up rapport with the Hindu nationalists and Congress

who, in return, stated the Namdhari Sikhs as the true nationalists and patriots. Moreover, the Congress recognized Namdhari Guru Ram Singh as the harbinger of the Non-Cooperation and Swadeshi movements in Punjab.[59] Furthermore, the Ghadar Revolutionaries and Shahid-i-Azam Bhagat Singh went a step further and recognised and appreciated anti-imperial struggle launched by Namdhari Guru Ram Singh and the Kuka Sikhs. Nevertheless, the Namdhari Sikhs participated in the national movement. Simultaneously, they were seized of the communitarian concerns and tried to bring the Sikhs of different religious and political affiliations on the common platform. Nevertheless, they perceived the declaration of independence as merely a transfer of power. Like their counterparts they could neither nullify the Communal Award nor stop partition. They thought that the transfer of power could only heal up the wounds slowly. The ugly scars of poverty and hunger, communal tension and violence were yet to be removed.[60]

Notes and References

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17. See, special issue of *Satjug*, March-April 2001 on its completion of 80 Years: Some of its Managers/ Managing Editors were Maharaj Gurdial Singh (26 May 1920- December 1920), Nidhan Singh Alam (December 1920 to 1924), Balwant Singh (1925 to 1954), Gurdial Singh (1954 to 1986), Harbans Singh (1987-1992), and Master Nihal Singh (1993 to 2001). Its important editors were Nirankar Singh Chetan (26 May to 13 October 1920), Nidhan Singh Alam (13 October 1920 to 1924), Sant Inder Singh Chakarvarti 1924 to 1938, 1943), Pritam Singh Kavi (1940 to 1957 to 1966), Swami Sharda Nand (1941), Pritam Singh Panchi (1942 to 1944), Master Nihal Singh (1945 to 1953), Rajinder Singh (1945 to 1957), Swaran Singh Snehi (1967) Gurbhajan Singh Namdhari, Santokh Singh Sajan, Atama Singh Sankhatra (1968- 1951), Atama Singh Johal (1992), Amar Bharti (1992 to 1993), Haryendra Singh Hanspal and Tara Singh Anjan (1993 onward).
18. First editorial note cited in *Satjug* 2001, p8.
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20. Kala Singh, *Kuka Singh Ate Angrez, Jaat, 1922, p. 42*
21. Sohan Singh Josh, *Akali Morchian Da Ithias*, Navyug Publishers, Delhi, 1972, p. 513.
22. See, Devinder Singh Gill, *Partap Singh Gur Ka Ghat Ghat*, New Delhi, 1991, p. 94.
23. Cited in *Satjug* (special issue), March- April, 2001, pp 30-31.
24. Ibid.
25. *Op. Cit.* p 48.
26. *Akali*, 12 July, 1920, p 1.
27. *Kuka*, 28 August, 1922, p 2; 30 August 1922, pp 2-3; 16 September 1922, p 2: on several occasions, this newspaper expressed differences over the question of control and management of Gurdwaras and mode of agitation of the Gurdwara Reform Movement. The newspaper also reported some minor incidence of clashes between Namdhari Sikhs and Akali Jathas. Nidhan Singh Alam, Editor, *Kuka*, did not recognize SGPC as the true representative body of the Sikh community. He regretted that there was no representative of the Sikh sects on this committee.
28. *Kuka*, 13 September 1922, p 4.

29. For detail, see, *Satjug*, 2001, p 33.
30. Harbans Singh, (ed), *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism* Vol. III, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1997, pp 502-03: "Maharaja made some efforts to regain his *gaddi*; but was unsuccessful. But he remained unbent and unrepentant. Early in 1927, he went on pilgrimage to Sri Abichalnagar Hazur Sahib Nanded where he took the Khalsa pahul (initiation rites) for a second time and was renamed Gurcharan Singh, . He died at KodaiKanal on 13 December 1942"
31. *Satjug*, March- April, 1937.
32. *Satjug*, November, 1934, p. 4.
33. *Satjug*, November 1934, p. 9. see also, Jaswinder Singh & Tara Singh Anjan (eds.), *Partap Sade Gur Ka Ghat Ghat*, p. 104.
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42. For detail, see, *Satjug*, 17 June 1938, p 6-7, 13 ਸਾਵਣ 1938, pp. 6-10, 17 ਭਾਦਰੋ, 1932, pp. 6-7, 24 cyqr 1938, p. 4.
43. For detail, see *Satjug*, 15 ਸਾਵਣ, 1942, pp.3-5, 29 ਸਾਵਣ, 1942, pp.5-6; 16 ਅਸੂ, 1942, pp.3-4, 20 ਕਤਕ, 1942, pp.3-4, 14 ਕਤਕ, 1942, pp.4-5, 15 ਮਾਘ, 1942, pp.2-3.
44. *Khalsa Samachar*, December 11, 1941, pp. 5-6.
45. *Kuka Kufar Tor Conference* was organized by the Akalis at the Mullanpur near Ludhiana on 21-22 February 1942, see, Partap Singh, *Kuka Gurudom*, Chattar Singh-Jiwan Singh, Amritasr, 1972, p. 117.
46. J.S.Grewal, pp. 169-70.
47. *Satjug*, 2 ਵੈਸਾਖ, 1935, pp.9-10.
48. Ibid, 23 ਵੈਸਾਖ, 1935, p 6.
49. For detail, see, *Satjug*, 24 ਚੇਤਰ, 1938 1938, pp. 13; 16 ਵੈਸਾਖ 1938, p.5.
50. Ibid, 13 ਵੈਸਾਖ 1938, p. 3.

51. For detail, see, *Satjug*, 24 cyqr, 1955 (March 1938), p 13; 16 ਵੈਸਾਖ 1955 (April 1938), p 5.
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53. Bipan Chandra, *Indian Struggle for Independence*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 1989, p 437.
54. *Satjug*, 23 , ਵੈਸਾਖ 1938, p. 8, jyT, 1938, p. 6.
55. Francine, R. Frankel, pp. 697-98.
56. Kuldip Singh, p 146.
57. *Satjug*, 8 December, 1943, p 3.
58. *Satjug*, 5 ਭਾਦਰੋਂ 1942, pp. 3-4.
59. Bipan Chandra, pp 437-38.
60. Nahar Singh and Kirpal Singh (eds.), *Rebels Against the British Rule*, Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 1995, XXVI-XXVII.

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CHAPTER—IV
LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

The Namdhari leaders and Activists

Before we outline social background of the Namdhari leaders and activists, it is essential to know the number of the Namdhari Sikhs since second half of 19th century. As the Kuka movement was anti-British, the British officials kept surveillance on the active Namdhari followers and gurus. They tried to estimate their number whenever Namdhari Guru Ram Singh led processions on certain occasions. For instance in 1867, the officials estimated that 10,000 to 20,000 Namdhari Sikhs were expected to participate in the Diwali festival to be held at Amritsar. Such a big participation indicated a larger social base of the Kuka movement. The Secretary, Foreign Department, Government of India, estimated that the total population of the Namdharis was nearly 3 lakhs. Whereas the Namdhari scholars estimate that it was around about one million.[1] The huge gap between the official and Namdhari estimate needs further proving. However, there is not denying the fact that the Kuka movement was a mass-movement and wide spread in the Malwa, Doaba and Majha regions of Punjab.

The Namdhari scholars substantiate their figures on the basis of observation of some contemporary writers like Gulam Bhikh Jalandhari who simply says that the Kukas' number was in lakhs. We do not have any mechanism to verify the exact number. The Census of 1891 and 1901 record Kuka population just 10,541 and 13,788 respectively. In the wake of state-repression in the last quarter of 19th century, there is no denying the fact that the common *sehajdhari* Namdhari Sikhs did not disclose their identity, therefore, it is likelihood that a large number of Kuka families remained unaccounted. In early decades of 20th century,

Government's attitude towards 'Kukas' softened to the extent that Namdhari Guru vigorously launched his missionary movement and brought thousands of the people in the fold of Namdhari Panth. Inspite of his missionary campaign, the Census of 1931 recorded merely 13,000 Kuka populations. How is that half a million population of 19th century was reduced to thousands in early 20th century? Most probable explanation is that the Namdhari mass movement was marginalized by another mass Singh Sabha movement which had the backing of the British Government in the last quarter of 19th century. It was followed by another mass movement: the Akali movement in early 20th century. The Akali leadership was able to mobilise the Sikh peasantry on the issue of misuse of the gurdwaras by the *Mahants* and *Pujaris*. Consequently, there was a shift of the Sikh peasantry from Namdhari organisation to the SGPC and the Shiromani Akali Dal.[2]

By 1881, we have some statistical information about the social background of the Namdhari leaders and activists.[3] Although the official statistical information is inaccurate in the sense that the local informers overzealously inflated the number of Namdhari activists yet general information provided by them is helpful to know the social background of the Namdharis. They were Jats, Tarkhans, Lohars, Chamars and Mazhabis. The Jats constituted major Namdhari following. They were followed by artisan and menial castes.[4] If the artisan and menial castes constituted a small segment of the Namdhari following, it was due to the small population of their respective castes.[5] However, it is rightly stated that a wider support of agricultural and non-agricultural castes was due to the deprivation of their economic position under the British rule. Like the agriculturists, the *kamins* too suffered from the social and economic deprivation. Namdhari Guru Ram Singh's mission assured a better future for these classes.[6]

In the wake of famines, drought and also the application of the rigid land revenue system called Permanent Settlements, the agriculturists faced hard time and were compelled to mortgage

or sell their land holdings to money-lenders to pay the land revenue within the stipulated time.[7] The process of mortgaging the landholdings led to the crisis of universal indebtedness of the peasants as admitted by the official enquires. It can safely be inferred that the discontented Jat Sikh agriculturists responded to Namdhari Guru Ram Singh's mission in a big way. His mission promised a society free from exploitation and discrimination. It is for the same reason that the *kamins* also joined his mission in the hope to raise their social status. However, this scenario quickly changed towards the end of 19th century. As noted elsewhere, the British undertook massive projects to increase the agriculture productivity at the commercial level and gave special concessions to the Jat Sikh peasantry. The Jat Sikhs were also recruited in the British army. Moreover, the Singh Sabha movement further built up a rapport with the British raj which went a long way to marginalize the Namdhari Sikhs. Above all, the Akali and Babbar Akali movements became the centre stage of the Jat Sikh peasantry for articulating their economic grievances though on the issues of control of the historical gurdwaras. The Shiromani Akali Dal had already expanded its hold among the Jat Sikh peasants.

Subsequently, the Kirti-Kisan movement addressed to the issues of the peasantry and launched agitations involving largely Jat Sikhs in 1930s. Thus shrinking the social base of Namdhari sect among the Sikh agriculturists. It may be pointed out here that the Namdhari leadership was more inclined towards the Congress politics rather than peasant movements led by the left-wing leadership.[8]

However, the area of Namdhari activities was wide and comprehensive in late 19th Century. By 1881, we have a data of prominent Namdhari followers and leaders, though not adequate, which give us an idea of an area from where they operated. To begin with the Malwa region, the Kuka activities were going on in the Districts of Ambala, Ludhiania, Ferozepur including Patiala, Nabha and Jind States. Approximately, the prominent Namdhari

leaders and activists in this area were 93 in 1867 and 178 in 1881.[9] Being nearer to Bhaini Sahib headquarters, the effective propaganda considerably increased the number of the Namdhari followers in this region. Another reason was that the density of the Sikh population in this area was more as compared to other districts.[10] Out of 152 activists in Ludhiana District in 1881, 75 were cultivators, 10 carpenters, 7 black-smiths, 3 tailors, 3 barbers, 3 jhinwars, 2 shopkeepers, 2 masons, 2 daily labourers, 2 cooks, one goldsmith and one medicant. There were 5 lambardars and 3 jagirdars who were active during this period.[11] Moreover, there were many activists in this district who had disposed of their property and plunged themselves in the Namdhari movement. Among them was Kala Singh alias Mastana Dewa Singh of village Raipur under Delhon police station. Lehna Singh s/o Ruldu of village Bhaini also followed the footsteps of Kala Singh in this regard and worked as the close attendant of Namdhari Guru Hari Singh.[12]

In Ambala District there were 12 active leaders in 1867 but their number decreased to 9 in 1881 most probably due to the repression of the government. One Hira Singh alias 'Lambu' Suba was very active leader. He was formerly in the service of the Maharaja of Kashmir State and was with Namdhari Guru Ram Singh at Bhaini during the Outbreak of 1872. He had repeatedly petitioned to the government to allow him to see his 'Satguru' Ram Singh at Rangoon. He succeeded in his mission in August 1880 to see his spiritual master in the company of Lal Singh of Latala village of Ludhiana District. However, he was arrested by the police when he came back. Another leader of this district was Attar Singh "Adjutant", who earned great respect among the Namdhari Sikhs. He was frequently visited by his '*gurbhais*'. One Mangal Singh, Jagirdar, was also a prominent local leader of the Ambala District.[13]

The number of prominent leaders in Ferozepur District was 37 in 1867, which went down to 17 in 1881, mainly because

of the state repression. Out of 17 activists; 13 were cultivators; two *jagirdars*, a carpenter and barb :. One Narian Singh was a bigoted Kuka, who spent his time in wandering about but organized the religious meetings. In June, 1879, he started for Rangoon to meet his 'Satguru' (Ram Singh) but was arrested on his return in the next month. Several letters purportedly to be written by 'Guru Ram Singh' were found in his possession.[14] Sobha Singh was another activist in this district. Besides, we have also information regarding those villages from which these activists came from. Among these villages were Takhtupur, Manookeh, Sikhewel, Mukatsar, Ghulia, Saidoke, Mohari, Rampur, Bilaspur, and Kherri.[15] The Patiala District list contained 33 prominent names in 1867 which were mainly drawn from Behleh, Nangal, Kanpur, Bhagee, Rasulpur, Manewale, Patiala, Fatehgarh, Mukatsar, Bumtar, Bhatinda, Rampur, and Naru. From Nabha, the British agents could identify just four Namdhari Sikhs in 1867. There is no reference of the prominent Namdhari Sikhs in the list of 1881. From Jind, the British official managed to identify only a leading Namdhari that was Jay Singh of Pidee.[16]

Next to the Malwa region was the Central Punjab comprising Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Amritsar, Lahore and Gurdaspur. The total number of prominent Namdhari followers in this region in 1867 was 110. Their numbers declined to 39 in 1881.[17] This was a considerable decrease.[18] There were two probable factors, which led to this decrease. First and foremost was the opposition of the Sikh Sardars who were very influential in this area. They were also joined by Mahants and Pujaris who opposed and condemned 'Baba' Ram Singh and his followers on some religious ground. As noted earlier both landed gentry and priestly class submitted a memorandum to the then Lt. Governor asking the British Government to crush this wicked sect.[19] Secondly, as noted earlier the Singh Sabha movement began to spread its influence. In all the towns of Central Punjab, the Singh Sabhas had been established. One of the main objectives of these

associations was to cultivate and promote loyalty to the British Government among the Sikhs.[20]

The prominent Namdhari Sikhs belonging to Jalandhar were headed by Kahn Singh, a 'leading propagandist' in 1867. Another prominent Namdhari was Roor Singh who worked as Suba for the Jalandhar Doab.[21] Among 8 prominent leaders four were as follow: one lambardar cultivator, two blacksmiths, and one *granthi* in 1881. Most of the Namdhari Sikhs of this district were from the villages Mothuddeh, Dhillwan, Bilaspur, Durgapur, Khoor, Takhtupur, Phillaur and Nawanshahr. Lambardar Fateh Singh of village Mathuddeh frequently visited Bhaini Sahib and used to bring presents for his 'Satguru' Hari Singh. His duties as lambardar were carried on by his son Amar Singh subsequently.[22]

In Hoshiarpur district, there was of only two prominent Namdhari leaders till 1881. One of them was Soodh Singh, who was convicted of damaging idols and was headman of the sect in this district and second was Bhag Singh of Possi, who was suspected of being Namdhari leader. Besides these leaders, there were two more activists. Both of them were Jagirdars: Mann Singh of village Pur Heeran and Chanda Singh of village Kaluwahar police station Haryana. It is stated that the latter made arrangements for the Namdhari Sikhs in this district.[23]

There were seven prominent Namdhari leaders in Gurdaspur in 1867. One of them was Kahn Singh of Malote and the other was Prem Singh of Umbotach who was mentioned as a brother of 'Baba' Balak Singh. Soodur Singh, Bhagwan Singh, Heera Singh and Nihang Singh were top leaders of this district.[24] By 1881, there were about five more prominent Namdhari leaders mentioned in the Police list. Out of them two were agriculturists and three non-agriculturists. Suba Kartar Singh Bedi of Dehra Baba Nanak and Naib Suba Hari Singh of Singoopur were active members of the community. Thatherke, Pakhoke, Madogole, Choranwali and Pannuan Khokhar villages were mentioned

especially, for having Namadhri following in the last quarter of 19th century.[25]

Amritsar was perhaps the major Namdhari centre in Majha region. There were 53 activists coming from the villages of Fathewal, Burj, Urchuk, Chowgawn, Lamehra, Roorkee, Ogikeh, Binsowal, Malowal, Shahure, Nangal, Ravi, Ducriyano, Kote, and Benyeh. On the top of the Amritasr list was Naina Singh, who worked as a Suba and especially carried on the task of the propagation of Namdhari mission. Suba Sahib Singh was another important lieutenant of Namdhari Guru Ram Singh.[26] The number of these activists quickly declined by 1881. The police could hardly record 10 names. This decrease from 53 in 1867 to 10 in 1881 was due to the increasing influence of the Singh Sabha movement. Out of 10 mentioned in the list 2 were lambardar cultivators, and 2 non-agricultivators. Suba Sahib Singh and Roor Singh of village Bangalipur and Suba Bhagwan Singh of village Fatehpur Naina Singh of village Wariya Police station Sarhali, Kharak Singh of village Kakkar Gill, and Police station Lopoke were prominent Namdharis of this district.[27] In Lahore there were 14 prominent Namdhari leaders mentioned in the police list of 1881. Prior to 1881 there is no information about them. Buta Singh Diwan, a Kalal by caste, was the most influential and rich leader of Lahore city. He owned a press in the city and published anti-British material for propagating the Namdhari teachings. He and his associates entertained the nostalgia of the restoration of the Khalsa raj.[28]

The Namdhari activists were not only confined to Malwa and Central regions of the Punjab but also to the western Punjab. The number of prominent Namdhari activists in this region was 50 in 1867 and 28 in 1881. The Sialkot list of 1867 contained the name of Jamiat Singh, who was also the lambardar of village Gill. He was mentioned as a "propagandist". Another important name in the list of 1867 was that of Jiwan Singh of Kila Sobha Singh. The other activists came from Lukiyana, Gill, Langhur, Dehra,

Neokhemal, and Killa Sobha Singh villages. By 1881 there was a substantial fall in the number of these activists. In this year, out of nine, 6 were agriculturists, one *patwari*, one banker, and one carpenter.[29] Gurcharan Singh of Chack Ram Dass in Thana Satrah built up Namdharis' relations with Afghanistan and Russia. He travelled all over Afghanistan, visiting Qandahar, Ghazni, Bokhara and Kabul and met with considerable proselytizing success amongst Aroras and Sunars under the guidance of his 'Satguru' (Hari Singh). Earlier he also organised the Kuka meetings and was able to bring some persons into the Namdhari fold. Gurcharan Singh built up a Dharmsala at Kabul.[30] Hamja Ghos, Ugochak, Allomuhar, Basara, Sikhane, and Chack Ramdas were some big villages of Sailkaot District, where Namdhari Sikh leaders actively carried on the mission. Mahant Prem Singh of Gurdwara Babe di Ber also became Namdhari Sikh. The Gujranwala District list of 1867 showed that this area had special importance in the Namdhari movement. On this list, the top name was that of Jota Singh who was mentioned by Captain Well as a chief disciple. Among 32 others mentioned in the list were Thakur Singh, Kishan Singh, Gurmukh Singh, Mangal Singh and Heera Singh. They were leaders of various centers. This list included some money-lenders and shopkeepers of the Gujranwala town too. It showed that the Namdhari movement was spreading towards the towns of west Punjab. Prominent leaders were drawn from Jhabran, Malka, Ruttala, and Bhooka Chima.[31] The police list of 1881 mentioned the 18 activists in Gujranwala District. Out of them 8 were Jagirdars and lambardars. 3 shopkeepers, 2 traders, priest, labourer and cultivator. One Lehna Singh, Sardar of village Garjakh of Gujarnwala police station, was the son- in-law of famous General Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa. He was Rias. One Tara Singh s/o Avtar Singh of village Misrimaini Sikh was appointed Adjutant of the two companies of the Namdharis which were raised by the Maharaja of Kashmir in 1871 and disbanded in the early part of 1872.[32]

Captain Menzies and Captain Miller mentioned just five prominent activists in the Rawalpindi District. Among them were Kahn Singh, Ram Kishan and Hari Singh. Small number of these activists was due to the fact that Hazroo could not become a centre of the Namdhari movement.[33] It is mentioned in the police list of 1881 that there was a Namdhari Dharamsala at Rawalpindi under the control of Bhai Kahn Singh who recited *gurbani* in the morning and evening.[34] In Peshawar, Bedi Kanayia Singh and Baba Jagat Singh preached the Namdhari mission.

Subsequently, we don't have district-wise statistical information pertaining to the period from 1881 onward. The only information is of those prominent Namdhari Sikhs who were appointed as the member of the Namdhari Darbar by Namdhari Guru Partap Singh. They were expected to take care of the Namdhari programme at the local level. In its issue of 1939, the *Satjug* published the list of these leaders and also their district-wise appointments. The total number of these prominent leaders in all the three regions of the Punjab was three hundred and seventy two. Interestingly, their number is higher than the number of former prominent 'Kuka' activists recorded by the British Government in the late nineteenth century. The increased number indicates that there was a further spread of the Namdhari mission under Namdhari Guru Partap Singh.[35] In this regard, the west Punjab was important where for the first time some leaders from the Montgomery, Lyallpur, Sargodha, Sheikhupura, Peshawar and Multan Districts were appointed. Their district-wise number was as follow: Montgomery 27, Lyallpur 20, Sargodha and Sheikhupura 11 each, Peshwar and Rawalpindi 10 each, and Multan had 3 prominent local leaders.[36] According to the Namdhari tradition, Namdhari Guru Partap Singh thought of reviving the original centre of the Namdhari movement which was at Hazroo in the Rawalpindi District. He undertook the extensive tours of these districts as well. In order to continue his mission, he appointed local activists.[37] In fact, the concentration of the Namdhari mission

in west Punjab took place in 1907 when he organized a *Holla Mohalla* at Gujarat. He also organized 8 *Hollas* in Sheikhupura, 2 in Gujaranwala, 2 in Lyallpur, 1 in Rawalpindi and 1 in Sargodha during the period from 1907 to 1959. The *Holla* was an assembly of the Namdhari following which continued for couple of days (4-5days).[38] During these days, several activities were performed such as recitation of *gurbani*, *Asa di Var*, competition of religious poems related to the lives of Namdhari Gurus, *havan* to purify the environment; and lectures on the Namdhari history. The *Paths* of the *Adi-Granth* and *Dasam Granth* for *Satguru* Ram Singh's home coming and mass Anand marriages were also organized.[39] Holding such *hollas* indicates the spread of this mission in this area of Punjab. It may be mentioned here that the Sikh zamindars along with artisans were rehabilitating the canal colonies during this time. This process of rehabilitation further facilitated the missionary task in this region.[40] In Sheikhupura District, the Namdhari followers mainly came from Manawala, Mandi Chukari-Kana, Chuhejhar, Chak Gill-114, 20 Chak Madhiala, and Vam villages, Similarly, in Gujaranwala District Kotla Tapian, Bore, Hindu Chak, Pipaliwal, Kotli Aroora, Kamoke, Banke-Cheema, Malake villages provided Namdhari followers. Khanduwali, Jamke, Kiampur and Randhawe were other villages which had substantial number of the Namdhari Sikhs. In District Montgomery, Machinwel, Rehi, Malang, Chak 95 Kot Heera Singh, Ganjner, Chawinal, Bahawalpur, Bhedwali and Bhoewali villages had some Namdhari followers. Ghukewali, Chak123 and Chak No 103 were also known for the Namdhari followers in Multan District. In addition, there were also many villages of the Namdhari followers in Lyallpur, Sargodha, Rawalpindi and Peshawar Districts of the west Punjab in early 20th century.[41]

The local Namdhari leaders were appointed in the districts of central Punjab and Malwa region. In the central Punjab, district-wise break-up of these leaders were like this: 40 from Amritsar, 35 Jalandhar, 42 Lahore and 15 from Gurdaspur. Similarly, in the

Malwa region, the district-wise break up of the local leaders was as follow: 43 Ferozepur, 35 Ludhiana and 10 from Ambala. It is very interesting to note that in terms of number of local leaders, the West Punjab was at the top, It was followed by the Central Punjab and Malwa region. In the later region, only 88 activists were appointed on Namdhari Darbar.[42] It is important to note that local leaders were also appointed from outside Punjab and India. By this time, substantial number of the Namdhari followers went to Delhi. This is indicated by the fact that 30 local leaders were appointed from this city alone. Next to Delhi was Bombay, Pune and Lucknow having 10, 5 and 5 leaders respectively. Leaders were also appointed from Brailly, Jhansi and Kharakpur towns. Their migration and settlements in the towns also shows that the Namdhari Sikhs were in search of job and business avenues. From their occupational callings, it can be presumed that majority of these Namdhari Sikhs were mainly from the traditional business and artisan castes.[43]

The partition of the Punjab in 1947 forced the Namdhari Sikhs to migrate from West Punjab to East Punjab. Like their counterparts, the Namdhari Sikhs crossed River Ravi and took shelter in the refugee-camps in Amritsar, Jalandhar and Patiala. Afterwards, they moved to different villages and towns of East Punjab and resettled wherever they felt secure and found means of livelihood. A large number of them moved to the town of Mandi in Himachal Pradesh. According to an estimate, about 80 percent of the Namdhari families which migrated to this town came from Sialkot, Gujranwala, Sheikhupura, Lyallpur, Lahore and Rawalpindi Districts of Pakistan. Similarly, they settled in the towns of Jalandhar, Amritsar, Ludhiana, Batala and Delhi. There were some specific reasons of their choice to move to the town of Mandi of Himachal Pradesh.[44] It seems that their migration from the other Indian places was encouraged by the availability of occupational avenues of this town. Another factor which also encouraged Namdhari Sikhs to resettle at Mandi was their belief

that the reincarnation of their Guru Ram Singh was likely to take place at Rawelsar.[45] It is stated that before and after partition, Namdhari Guru Partap Singh approached King of Bilaspur for giving refuge to the Namdhari Sikhs in his territory but he did not agree. Then he met Raja of Mandi, Joginder Sen with whom he had cordial relations and asked him to allow Namdhari Sikhs to settle down at Mandi, He agreed upon to 'Guru's' request. Thus the Namdhari Sikhs resettled in this town.[46]

Although most of the migrant families had resettled themselves with their own efforts yet some of them were lucky to get support from their relatives and friends. However, the support and help of the local people of the Mandi town, Namdhari Guru and Government went a long way in the process of their resettlement. The Namdhari's main source of livelihood was shop-keeping in the initial stage. Some of them, however, started their careerers as labourers and kiosk owners. Subsequently, it seems that some of the professional Namdharis also came to this town and settled there. They were doctors, engineers and petty administrative personnel. Similar patterns of resettlement of migrant Namdhari Sikhs are perceptible in the localities of Preet Nagar and Basti Bhure Khan of Jalandhar city. More than 80 percent of these Namdhari families came from Sialkot District.[47]

Some of the Namdhari Sikhs went abroad: the South East Asian countries like Burma and Thailand. Maximum number of immigrant Namdhari Sikhs is found in Thailand. The process of their immigration to this country, according to one source, began in the last of quarter of 19th century.[48] During 1880-85, it is said that Ladha Singh of village Philoke in Gujranwala District was the first Namdhari to reach Thailand. A firm under the name of L.S. Bhagwan Singh was started in 1890. It became one of the best Indian firms in Thailand subsequently. By the early years of 20th century, several relatives and friends belonging to the village of Ladha Singh and other area reached Thailand and started their business. Ladha Singh's business flourished and he was known as Seth.[49]

Among the Punjab immigrants to Bangkok, Sant Dhian Singh was prominent Namdhari who made all possible efforts for the spread of the Namdhari mission in this country. Similar efforts were also made by Sant Inder Singh Changmai and Sant Isher Singh. Those Namdhari Sikhs who were unsettled by the partition, especially from Gujranwala, and Sialkot Districts also migrated to Thailand and settled there.[50] By 1950's the Namdhari Sikhs in Thailand were able to establish their own Dharamsala and thought of opening of their educational institutions. Most of the Namdhari Sikhs in Bangkok were petty cloth merchants. Majority of them were Aroras by sub-caste. They were Chawlas, Narulas, Sachdevas, Malhotars, Hans, Manchandas and Madans etc.[51] Among them, Sant Khazan Singh Sachdeva, Sewa Singh, Seth Gurbax Singh, Suhail Singh and Mangal Singh were prominent Namdhari Sikhs. Seth Dewan Singh Chawla was appointed Suba of the Changmai city by Namdhari Guru Partap Singh.[52]

A few Namdhari Sikhs became millionaires holding big estates in the different cities of Thailand. Having business aptitude, some of them founded Sri Audhaya Bank Sampheng Branch. Seth Tarlok Singh was its manager and later on became Director of this Bank. Seth Sohail Singh made a major success when he was appointed President of the Indian Chamber of Commerce. Meanwhile, the Namdhari population increased into thousand in Thailand.[53] Namdhari Guru Partap Singh took 22 tours to Thailand and organized a *Holla Mohalla* there in 1950. To carry on his mission, he also appointed 34 local leaders on Namdhari Darbar in 1939. An organization called Namdhari Sangat has looking after the affairs of Namdhari followers.

The East Africa was another sub-continent, which attracted a large number of the Namdhari immigrants. However early Sikh immigration to East Africa was predominantly Ramgarhias who were first brought as indentured labourers to build the Ugandan railway and subsequently recruited to provide skilled labour and played roles of middle men in the colonial economies. Sucheta

Mazumdar argues that the Ramgarhias were initially willing to accept indentured labour in East Africa because in the colonial economy of Punjab, the artisans became even more rapidly impoverished than the small landholders. She describes the earliest Ramgarhia emigration as a classic case of debt bondage migration.[54] Nevertheless, it was as early as 1930's that Suba Lal Singh founded a Namdhari institution at Nairobi. To expand and consolidate his mission Namdhari Guru Partap Singh undertook four tours of East Africa in the years 1952, 1953, 1958 and 1959. He could bring Ramgarhias under his influence and total number of the Namdharis arose to four thousand approximately in Narobi alone in 1959.[55] They were mainly engaged in the building construction. Having the occupational background of the Namdhari Sikhs in mind, he advised the Ramgarhias to open handicraft institutions. The Namdhari Sikhs settled in East Africa founded an institution called East African Namdhari Sangat' to look after the Namdhari affairs from time to time. Namdhari Istri Sabha was also founded.[56] Some of the important Namdhari Sikhs were Sant Puran Singh Karicho, Sant Rattan Singh Mumbasa, Bhagat Singh Narobi, Joginder Singh East Africa, Jathedar Arjan Singh Nairobi, Kessar Singh Kakkar, Ram Singh and Jaswant Singh. Among prominent women were Bibi Balwant Kaur, Narinder Kaur and Joginder Kaur.[57]

Namdhari Institutions and Organizations

Founding of the Namdhari socio-religious centers and expansion of Namdhari following went side by side. The first centre, subsequently becoming a pilgrimage, was at Hazro where the followers of Baba Balak Singh assembled and listened his spiritual discourse and meditated on the name of God. After the death of this Namdhari spiritual master, three prominent followers (Kahn Singh, Lal Singh and Ram Singh) moved in different directions. We do not have information excepting that Baba Balak Singh was head of this sect at Hazro. Lal Singh moved to Amritsar and somewhere in this town he held religious discourses which

were attended by some of his followers. However, it was left to Namdhari Guru Ram Singh to start mission at his native village, Bhaini Sahib Ludhiana. As noted earlier, he formed Sant Khalsa in 1857 here. The five Singhs to whom Namdhari Guru administered 'amrit came from the following districts of Punjab and native State: Labh Singh, Atma Singh from Amritsar; Alamuhar Sialkot; Kahn Singh Nihang, Chak Malerkotla; Naina Singh Wariah Amritsar and Sudh Singh village Durgapur, Jalandhar.[58]

Since the formation of Sant Khalsa, the Namdhari followers multiplied into thousand and spread over to villages and towns of Malwa, Doaba and Majha regions, the Namdhari Guru realized that he should have a team of deputies and local leaders to carry on his missionary work. In the initial stage, he formed a council comprising six members and assigned the task of propagation to them in their respective areas: Jawahar Singh in Amritsar, Kahn Singh in Nabha, Patiala and Sangrur, Sahib Singh and Brahama Singh in the Majha region; Sudh Singh and Lakha Singh in Doaba.[59] Later on, he evolved suba-system appointing seventeen deputies in different areas of Punjab. Contemporary Nirmala scholar, Gaini Gian Singh thought that Namdhari Guru adopted the Mughal Suba system. As we know that Mughal Emperor Akbar had introduced this system and divided his entire empire into twenty-two Subas (provinces). But the Namdhari scholars equate his Suba system with *Manji*-system of Guru Amardas.[60] Nevertheless, in each district there was one suba who coordinated the work of the local functionaries. Next to the subas were *naib-subas*, *jathedars* and *granthis*-the scripture readers.[61]

With some modifications, the structure of suba-system, continues till this date. With a passage of time, the number of functionaries and their duties have undergone a change. The number of functionaries had increased due to the expansion of the Namdhari community. The social background of these functionaries too had undergone a change. Continuing the old tradition, the *subas* undertake the task of a) propagating the Namdhari mission,

administering *bhajan* and *amrit* (rites of initiation) and making arrangements for performing *paths;* b) settling the local disputes with utmost impartiality; c) collecting *daswand'* d) ensuring peace in their respective areas and; e) bringing the cases of disobedience and self styled persons to the notice of Namdhari Guru. Presumably, the Subas performed these duties to their guru's satisfaction. The nature of these duties and functions implies that these *subas* confine themselves to the socio-religious activities in the post-independence period. Nevertheless, there is no bar on them to participate in the politics. The *subas* and other functionaries and the Namdhari community take part in the electoral politics and try to protect and promote the interests of their fellow beings. On certain occasions, they receive directions from Bhaini Sahib headquarters and act accordingly. In this context, the role of Namdhari Pardhans is important.

The founding of Namdhari *dharamsala*- the centre of congregational worship was a significant sectarian development. Till late nineteenth century the Sikh temples were known as *dharamsalas.* The founding of *dharamsalas* by the Namdhari Sikhs implied that the local Sikhs, either of their own or on the direction of the local officials and Sikh gentry did not allow Namdhari Sikhs' entry into the *dharamsalas.* As noted earlier, the priestly class and the Sikh gentry opposed the Namdhari Sikhs partly for the political and partly for the religious reasons. Moreover, on the directions from the British officials, the *lambdars, panchayatas* and the *zaildars* insulted and humiliated the Namdhari Sikhs in their own villages and did not allow them to hold their congregations and recite *bani* publically. Those who dared to perform *akhand paths* were awarded fines and put them into jail for six months to 7 years.[62] When and wherever such hostility ceased, the Namdhari Sikhs thought of founding their own *dharamsalas.* It is claimed by the Namdhari scholars that the Namdhari Guru Ram Singh himself got repaired several old and dilapidated *dharamsalas* and founded some new ones. He also

recovered old copies of *birs* (*Adi-Granths*) and installed them in the *dharamsalas*. He got printed these copies from Buta Singh's Press, Lahore. These copies were printed first on lithography and then on printing machine in *Gurmukhi* letters.[63] The founding of the *dharamsalas* also reflected the assertion of collective identity of the Namdhari Sikhs. By the end of 19th century, they had evolved their own *maryada* of reading and reciting *gurbani*, performing rituals pertaining to the birth, marriage and death and holding religious discourses. The Namdhari *dharamsalas* were used for these purposes. However, the founding of *dharamsalas* also indicates that a social cleavage was emerging within the Sikh community.

When Budh Singh became head of Namdhari community and was known as 'Satguru' Hari Singh as per the will of his predecessor, he faced an uphill task of strengthening the organization. For sometime, some of the leading Namdhari sants including his family-members refused to acknowledge his leadership. They called him usurper and imposter.[64] However three factors went in his favour. First and foremost was the instruction of his predecessor 'Satguru' Ram Singh asking his *subas*, *naib-subas* and local *jathedars* to see Budh Singh as his own personification. These deputies and functionaries had unflinching faith in the edicts of their spiritual master. Secondly, those who opposed Budh Singh had neither access to nor the support of Namdhari Guru Ram Singh's confidants as well as the Namdhari followers who had spread all over Punjab. Thirdly, political condition was hostile towards the Kuka Sikhs. The British officials and local *lambdars* and *zaildars* were tough and rough towards the Kuka Sikhs. In this situation, it was low-key policy and tolerant disposition of Namdhari Guru Hari Singh which could sustain the semblance of organization laid down by his predecessor. When his procedure was deported, he left behind hundred fifty men and women (including his family members) and eighty two animals comprising camels, horses, bufflows and

cows and eleven attendants. Most of the structures for the accommodation of these personnel and animal stock were temporary sheds. Moreover, most of the articles including cash was confiscated by the government. The Namdhari Guru was left with meager sources to run the *dera*. Perhaps, some cash (Rs 6000/-) amount hidden in the stable was used by him. Namdhari Guru Ram Singh left a dairy which recorded the debt and credit which his clients owed to him. His successor could bank upon this amount also. He instructed his successor to curtail the items of expenditure particularly on the animal stock. Nevertheless, inspite of the financial crunch, the Namdhari Guru could carry on the routine of the *dera* essentially because the unconditional and volunteer support extended by the Namdhari Jathas who came from distant places to Bhaini Sahib. They provided skilled and semi-skilled labour when Guru undertook the construction work. Moreover, Namdhari Guru Ram Singh got some land for growing fodder. One of the trusted and the devout confidants of the Namdhari Guru was Lehna Singh, Lambardar and a rich *Zamindar* of Bhaini Sahib, who donated five bigas of land around the Akal Bunga. Subsequently, his sons got entire landholdings attached to the Namdhari *dera* during Namdhari Guru Hari Singh's times. Nearby Bhaini, there was a village Punia whose seven acres of land was also attached to the *dera*. When Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha State was blessed with a son, he too assigned a big revenue free jagir land to the *dera* in Bir Bhamarci.[65]

Namdhari Guru Hari Singh made an important contribution when Ramsar Tank was constructed on the place where lord Ram Chandra was said to have meditated and performed *havan*. Inspite of the initial opposition to the construction of this tank by the local people, it soon attained a status of a holy tank for the Namdhari pilgrims. The Namdhari followers came to believe that there was no need to go to any other sacred place for *ishnan* as a dip in this nector could wash of their sins. Around the pond, a garden was constructed which was once a favourite resort of their

'Satguru' Ram Singh. Namdhari Guru Hari Singh got constructed residential rooms as the number of pilgrims increased. Besides, he revived the *langar* system, which was interrupted for sometime. The Namdhari attendants on the horses were sent to the villages for collecting *daswand* (one-tenth) in the form of cash and grain from the Namdhari followers. The Namdhari pilgrims who came to Bhaini Sahib also gave offerings.[66] The Namdhari tradition records that when there was a shortage of raw material for *langar*, Baba Baghel Singh Narli, Amritsar, Baba Natha Singh Ghardiwal, Ferozepur, Baba Kahn Singh Buraj, Amritsar and Subegh Singh contributed. Rs two thousand five-hundred and purchased raw-material for the *langar* and the same was sent to Bhaini Sahib. The number of such devotees steadily increased when hostility of the government declined partly due to the pacific policy of Namdhari Gurus and partly due to the launching of anti-British agitations and movements by other than Namdhari Sikhs in early 20th century. Moreover, in the wake of the Rowlett Bills agitation and the Akali Movement, the British revised their policy towards the Kukas. Consequently, the Namdhari Sikhs began to take part in the community service without any fear. Their guru made arrangements for serving the *langar* to the needy pilgrims regularly. The Namdhari tradition further tells us that the large number of semi starved cultivators and shefered came to Bhaini Sahib when the famine broke in Malwa region adjoining to Rajasthan in late 19th century.[67] Namdhari Guru earned the gratitude of these needy people. He himself took meals in the common kitchen. His simple life-style endeared him to the common man.

Namdhari Guru Partap Singh developed Bhaini Sahib Headquarters keeping utility as well as spirit of the Namdhari teachings in mind. The place where his father and predecessor were cremated, he got removed cremation mark as some of the devotees starting burning lamps over that spot in the evening. A simple *kacha* structure was constructed and named *Hari Mandir*. Since then, it has been a centre of meditation and *kirtan*. Similarly,

a structure known as *Shahidi Bunga* was constructed at the spot where 'mother' Bhupinder Kaur and Maharaj Gurdial Singh were cremated. (subsequently, he himself was cremated nearby that place) Besides, there were two *kacha* rooms which accommodated students of the Namdhari Vidyalaya (1928). After sometime, this school got a new building comprising four *pakka* rooms. It was here that his two sons Jagjit Singh and Bir Singh and their close associates learnt *Panj-Granthi*, *Bhagat Bani* and the *Adi-Granth*. They also got lessons in English and Sanskrit languages. This building remained intact till 1990. By this time, Namdhari scholars and functionaries used to stay at this headquarters for some years. The Namdhari pilgrims also used to stay for some time in a residential building which was constructed for them. For his own use, Namdhari Guru constructed a retiring room which was in the rectangular shape and its roof was made of bamboos and straw. In his own time, it was known as *Goal Chhapar*. It was here that the Namdhari Guru departed from this world in 1959. By that time it came to be known as *Goal Mandir*. Since then *akahand paths* are performed here. The Namdhari Guru also took care of the common-kitchen, which required a big quantity of wheat flour daily. To meet this requirement, the traditional flour mill known as *kharas* was installed.

III

Namdhari Guru Jagjit Singh's resolve to shift from Sri Jiwan Nagar and stay at Bhaini Sahib headquarters in 1978 was an important beginning for restructuring the existing important places located in this headquarters. His father and predecessor had already set a modern pattern of construction at Jiwan Nagar. He had a rich administrative and diplomatic skills to mobilise the resources. Moreover, he had "links" in the political circles and bureaucracy which strengthened his position as the head of the Namdhari sect. He bequeathed this legacy to his son and successor when he involved him in the construction work at Jiwan Nagar. By the time, Namdhari Guru Jagjit Singh moved at Bhaini Sahib,

the agrarian economy of the Punjab State had been transformed by the Green Revolution, percolating the economic prosperity among the agrarian as well as artisan classes relatively. Simultaneously, development of trade and industry, means of transportation, power-generation and infrastructure of marketing net-work transformed the life-style and status of the rural and urban classes. The Namdhari followers, rural and urban, were now in a better position to respond to the wishes of their spiritual master. Meanwhile, a large number of the Namdhari Sikhs who had settled in the capital headquarters and business and industrial towns of India were also in a better position to help their spiritual master financially. Similarly, the Namdhari immigrants in countries like Thailand, United Kingdom of England and Canada had made rapid successes in the trade and industrial sectors and in the educational and cultural fields. To integrate above-mentioned Namdhari congregation with Bhaini Sahib headquarters, the spiritual master expanded the network of organization and appointed his deputies and functionaries for tapping finances in the form of *daswand* and donations. He also engaged the services of engineers and architectures whenever a new structure was to be built up or old structures were to be kept up for historical legacy.

For the overall development of twin-villages, Sri Bhaini Sahib-Rayian Development Board has been formed and approved by the Punjab Government. The object of this board is to transform these two villages into a modern town. The power Sub Station and the Electronic Telephone Exchange have been established. The postal and banking facilities have been provided. The Water-Headwork has been constructed. The sewerage has been laid down and public toilets have been constructed for the villagers. The Arya Vedic and Allopathic Dispensaries provide health services. The streets of these two villages are pacca and project of the street light is in progress. The Panchayat Ghar has been constructed. There are three schools which impart education upto +2 level. The Anganwari School takes care of children of the

working ladies. For the pilgrimages, two *dharamsalas* have been constructed. The Development Board conceived the major projects of Sports Academy and Polytechnic institution. Satguru Partap Singh Sports Academy has been provided with infra-structure of gymnasium and play grounds especially Hockey Stadium. In a short time, this academy has produced sportsmen who have had honour to be the members of national and international teams.

Recently, the Namdhari Sikhs have given more intention to preserve their historical places and buildings. Under the aegis of their 'Satguru' Jagjit Singh, they have taken over the control of those places either after winning the legal battles or prevailing upon the government to declare these places or monuments as the Namdhari heritage. Important among these places are in Amritsar, Ludhiana and Malerkotla. The Kuka Martyrs Memorial Trust was formed by late Chief Minister of Punjab, S. Beant Singh. In his presence, foundation stone was laid by Namdhari Guru Jagjit Singh in 1993 at Malerkotla. For constructing the memorial, the land was allotted by the then Defence Minister of India, Babu Jagjiwan Ram. One of the trusties, Sh. Surinder Singh Namdhari is playing an important role in shaping the structure of this memorial.[68] The structure of the memorial is coming up in Malerkotla where 66 Kukas were blown up by the guns. The Trust is also planning to open polytechnic and hospital in dedication to these martyrs of Malerkotla. Already, sixty-six feet long *Khanda* has been installed in their memorary in the complex covering 13.50 acres of land. The Trust has also constructed memorials at Ludhiana, Raikot and Amritsar. The Kuka Martyrs Memorial Trust has established a gurdwara at Ram Bagh Amritsar where four *kukas* were hanged on the tree in 1871. The local Namdhari organization holds periodical congregations, seminars and conferences. Several main and approach roads connecting the Namdhari historical places have been named after the Namdhari Gurus and *shaheeds*. Similarly, the Namdhari parks and roundabouts have been constructed. From Ludhiana to Katani road is known as Satguru Ram Singh Ji Marag.[69]

Both Congress and Akali Governments have had been generous in terms of recognising Namdhari claims over the historical places and handing them over to the Namdhari trusts.

IV

However, the Namdhari leadership is seized of the adverse effects of the so-called modern education and culture. The leadership notes that youth exposed to in these institutions and television media have tendency to go for western life-style and indulgences like trimming hairs and beards, smoking and consuming liquor. As a result, youth gets alienated from its cultural heritage. To save them from such 'evils' Sarb Hind Namdhari Vidyak Jatha was formed in 1965 for providing the Namdhari youth a platform to protect itself from the evil effects and integrate itself with the Namdhari cultural heritage. In 1981, the women's wing was formed for checking the menace of fashion and dowry system.[70]

Under Namdhari Guru Partap Singh, Bhaini Sahib headquarters hummed with religious fervour too. Early in the morning, meditation on the name of God started. The Namdhari Sikhs recited *naam* while counting the beads of woolen rosary. Guru Nanak Dev's composition *Asa di War* and Guru Ram Dass's hymns were recited. The Namdhari Guru introduced a ritual called *varni* in 1959. The structure of this ritual was as follow: The two devout Namdhari Sikhs called *Sodhi Singhs* took full bath. One person recited the names of Sikh Gurus starting from Guru Nanak onward and other one counted the beads of woolen rosary. After two hours, first team retired and second resumed the duty. Two rooms were used which were lit by a cotton thread soaked into pure *desee ghee*. This *varni* system is continuing since then and has been introduced in the rest of Namdhari *dharamsalas*.

Namdhari Guru Partap Singh controlled and managed the organisation very intelligently. He did not make any fundamental change in the order of Suba system. The list of *subas* appointed

by him shows that he continued the practice of appointing more than the one *suba* in the same district.[71] For instance, there were two subas, namely Fatch Singh Manga and Khushal Singh. The former was incharge of the entire District Lahore and the latter took care of the activities of the Namdharis in the town of Lahore.[72] Infact, the Namdhari Guru took care of administrative requirements of moderate resurgence of the Namdhari Sikhs. This resurgence was the result of his missionary work which was going on in and outside Punjab. He formed several missionary *jaths* and sent them to distant places. Similarly, he appointed additional *subas* covering new districts of Punjab and new towns of U.P. Some of the *subas* were also appointed from aboard.[73] The Namdhari Guru appointed only those Namdhari Sikhs as *subas* who were thoroughly dedicated and devout Namdhari Sikhs. He also ensured that these *subas* led their life according to the Namdhari *maryada*. The *subas* were expected to carry on social, religious, cultural and political activities.[74] Moreover, he formed a *Parcharak Jathebandi* comprising *parcharaks*, *kavishars* (bards) and *sants*. Each member of the missionary *jatha* observed the following code of conduct: he was to meditate on the 'Nam' for an hour daily. He was forbidden to take tea and tap water while performing *kirtan*. The *Jatha* was forbidden to use *tabla*, harmonium and the '*chimta*', a musical instrument. The *parcharaks* were allowed to accept the offering but were forbidden to perform *ardas* in the name of that person. Moreover, they were not to compromise with the main spirit of *gurbani* while performing the *shabad kirtan*.[75] The Namdhari Guru himself held a large number of *Holla Mohallas* particularly in those areas where the Namdhari influence was weak. He undertook the following tours: twenty-two trips to Thailand, four trips to Africa, Singapore and several trips to the different parts of India during his life time.[76] He carried on the religious routine at Bhaini Sahib which comprised meditation on the holy name of God and recitation of *Asa di War*.

The most important decision taken by the Namdhari Guru was to establish Namdhari Darbar in 1921 at Bhaini Sahib. The main aim of this Darbar was to carry on political activities particularly in response to the national movement. Being aware of the implication of this decision, he appointed his younger brother Maharaj Gurdial Singh as the head of this Darbar. Maharaj was assisted by some scholars like Nidhan Singh Alam. There were more than two dozen members of this darbar.[77] The tenure of its each member depended upon the observation of Namdhari *rahit* and personal loyality to the 'Satguru'. In case of violation of these two norms, Namdhari Guru was quick to remove that member and appointed another in his place. Although these members were free to give their opinions yet the final decision was taken by Namdhari Guru himself. In fact, ultimate authority in all affairs rested with him. He expected an unflinching loyality from each member who might be working in different capacity.[78] Some of the resolutions passed by the Namdhari Darbar from 1937 to 1939, 1945, 1951, and 1954, relate to social and political affairs.[79] For instance, they underlined the importance of Namdhari association and its support to the Indian National Congress. However, the support was not unconditional. The Namdhari Sikhs supported the Congress politics provided it did not threaten the Namdhari identity.[80] In one of the resolutions the Namdhari Guru himself asked his followers to perform an 'ardas' for the better health of Subash Chander Bose.[81] Namdhari Guru Partap Singh was diplomat in keeping his brother at the top of this organisation yet keeping ultimate authority with him. Being a head of the religious organisation, he did not want to face any political embarrassment. During his leadership, the Namdhari Sikhs asserted their political identity too.

Namdhari Guru Ram Singh revived the Sikh tradition of ***kirtan***, singing in praise of God, or devotional singing.[82] It was during the life time of Sikh Gurus, from Guru Nanak Dev to Guru Arjan Dev that the devotional singing in congregation came into

being. "In the Adi-Granth itself the name of *ragas* and rhythm to be used in the singing are stated at the beginning of each section of hymns. The hymns are also classified according to the *gharu* or musical clef, in which each hymn is to be sung".[83] In fact, "the written text of the Adi-Granth has spiritual power only as it is sung. Guru Arjun for instance, stresses the spiritual power of *kirtan* as follows: The false thinking of both performers and hearers is destroyed when they participate in devotional singing."[84] The Namdhari Guru wished that through the devotional singing his followers should have personal experience of heavenly joy and spiritual ecstasy. Some of his followers while reciting the name of God lost control over their senses and emitted shrieks and their turbans off. He employed professional singers, the *ragis.* Moreover, he formed *ragi-jathas* (group of devotional singers) and *dhadi-jathas* (groups of bards). The *dhadis* were those who sung *vars* or ballads to the accompaniment of a musical instrument called *dhad,* a drumlet and *sarangi,* a stringed instrument. Since the days of Guru Hargobind (1595-1644), the *dhadis* have had flourished in the art of reciting heroic ballading at the Sikh assemblies.[85] Similarly, the *ragis* sung hymns of the *Adi-Granth* to the accompaniment of stringed musical instruments.

Namdhari Guru Ram Singh deployed these *ragi-jathas* and *dhadi-jathas* to the different areas as under follow: The *ragi jatha* of Bhai Ditu and Bhai Fakira in District Sailkot, *ragi-jatha* of Bhai Prem Singh and Bhai Kirpal Singh in Bhadaur, Malwa, *ragi-jatha* of Bhai Tara Singh and Bhai Pali (of Atari, Amritsar) in Majha area and *ragi-jatha* of Bhai Suba Singh in Doaba area. The *dhadi* jatha comprised Bhai Pasaushara Singh and Bhai Sant Singh who belonged to Talwandi Malyian sang the songs of bravery of the Sikh heroes wherever the Sikh assemblies were held in Punjab. To keep these *ragis* and *dhadis* under discipline, the Namdhari Guru instructed his *sangat* to observe austerity in extending hospitality to them. The singing *jathas* were given food and Rs one for other expenses.[86]

The process of imparting devotional music following the pattern of *ragas* and *ragnis* prescribed in the *Adi-Granth* was started by Namdhari Guru Partap Singh who himself was trained to memorise and recite *gurbani* in his early years. He listened *kirtan* of *Assa di War* in early morning and *shabad kirtan* in the evening. He got training in music from Bhai Sahib Sant Mastan Singh who was expert in playing on *dilruba* and *taause*, musical instruments. Sant Mastan Singh came from Namdhari- family of village Rajja in District Gujranwala (now in Pakistan). Namdhari Guru Partap Singh also got some training from *Ustad* Bhai Ghaja Singh who played on *dilruba.* During his lifetime, the Namdhari Guru became conscious of the devotional music and himself played on *taause*. To promote classical devotional music, he established Namdhari Maha Vidyalaya at Bhani Sahib headquarters in 1928. He appointed *Ustad* Harnam Singh, *Ustad* Udho Khan and his son *Ustad* Rahim Baksh. Both father and son belonged to Talwandi *gharana* of music. The students admitted in this vidyalaya were given rigorous training for years together. Moreover, the Namdhari Guru organized Gurmat Sangeet Samelan in 1933 at Bhani Shaib and awarded each artist with prizes according his merit.

To promote devotional *shashtri sangeet*, (classical music) Namdhari Guru Partap Singh appointed *ustads* for his sons, Jagjit Singh and Bir Singh. Prominent among these *Ustads* were Bhai Harnam Singh, *Ustads* Udho Khan and Rahim Bakhsh. Moreover, Namdhari Guru Partap Singh set a precedent of discovering and patronising *rababees* and *ragis.*[87] Among *rababees* were Bhai Kalu and Taaba, Bhai Sunder, Bhai Sandal and Bhai Sohna of village Kotli Ramdas District Sailkot; Bhai Fatu and Matu of village Bola-Tola, District Sialkot, Bhai Jai Singh of village Mauli District Jalandhar, Bhai Gurmukh Singh, Bhai Sarmukh Singh of village Mohawa District Amritsar. Among the *ragis* were Sant Lal Singh of village Bhure Gill District Amritsar, Sant Nidhan Singh Alam of village Lopoke District Amritsar. Sant Nidhan Singh was

a prominent writer and *parcharak*. Bhai Ganesha Singh, Gujranwala, Bhai Basant Singh, Bhai Harnam Singh (son of Bibi Nanda daughter of Namdhari Guru Ram Singh) Bhai Gurbaksh Singh and Bhai Nirmal Singh (grandsons of Bibi Nanda) Ludhiana. Besides, there were Sant Darshan Singh and Sant Khazan Singh of village Cheecha Bakna Amritsar. Namdhari Guru Jagjit Singh continued the tradition of patronizing musicians irrespective of their castes and creeds. Before partition, several *rababees* who happened to be Muslims, were invited to Bhaini Sahib headquarters and extended liberal grants. In 1942 among them were Bhai Moti, Bhai Sunder and Sohna, Bhai Bhagicha, Bhai Jaimal, Bhai Abdul Haq, Bhai Haider, Bhai Jaaba, Bhai Desa and Bhai Anayat. Those who played on *pakhavaj* were Bhai Nasir, Bhai Santu and Bhai Rakha. After the partition, Namdhari Guru Jagjit Singh made arrangements for engaging the services of prominent *ustads* representing different *gharanas* of *shashtri sangeet*. Among them were Pandit Shiv Kumar *(santoor)*, Ustad Vilayat Khan (tabla), Ustad Amjad Ali Khan *(sarod)*, Pandit Ram Narayan (*sarangi*) Pandit Kishan Maharaj *(tabla)* and Misra Bandhus, Rajin & Sajin brothers etc. Several Namdhari youngsters were trained by these *ustads*. As a result of rigorous training and dedication, a number of Namdhari families have emerged as the exponents of the *shashtri sangeet*.[88]

Briefly speaking, the Namdhari Sikhs comprised majority of agriculturists; next to them were artisans. There was a small number of traders and a few number of *Mazhabis*. A marginal number of well off *Zaminders* including *Zaildars* and *Rais* also responded to the Namdhari mission. The scope of the Namdhari movement was quite wide as it covered Ambala, Ludhiana, Ferozepur, Jalandhar, Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Sialkot, Lyallpur, Lahore and Rawalpindi Districts. The partition of Punjab (1947) radically changed the demography of the Namdhari followers. The Namdhari Sikhs of Pakistani Punjab moved to the Indian Punjab and settled at those places where they felt secure and

could avail sources: the agriculturists settled in those villages where they were allotted landholdings and non-agriculturists settled in both rural areas and urban centres where they could carry on the occupational callings. Namdhari Guru Partap Singh founded Jiwan Nagar for the rehabilitation of agriculturists as well as non-agriculturist followers. Consequently, Jiwan Nagar emerged another major centre of the Namdhari Sikhs in District Sirsa of Haryana State. Similarly, a substantial number of these Sikhs moved to the major cities like Delhi, Luckhnow, Kanpur and Kolkata. They also went abroad: Thailand, Myanamar (Burma), countries of East Africa and United Kingdom etc. The Namdhari spiritual masters evolved the organization comprising *subas, pardhans, jathedars, parcharaks* and *mahants* who have been associated with the Namdhari Darbar since 1921. The Namdhari Gurus also established religious, educational and cultural institutions. Prominent among them are Namdhari Vidyak Jatha, Satguru Partap Singh Sports Academy and a centre of devotional music. Moreover, the present Namdhari Guru Jagjit Singh has formed several committees and trusts for looking after the historical places and charitable institutions. The spiritual and temporal activities of the Namdhari community are controlled and guided by the Namdhari Guru himself.

Notes and References

1. For detail, see, Nahar Singh, *Gooroo Ram Singh and the Kuka Sikhs: Documents 1863-1871*, Vol.-I, Amrit Book Co., New Delhi, 1965, pp. 36-37; E.O. Maclagan, *Census of India 1891; The Punjab and Its Feudatories*, Vol. XIX, Simla, 1892, pp. 168-171. Liet. Colonel G. Mc. Andrew, Deputy Inspector General Police, Ambala Circle stated in his memorandum dated 20th November 1871 "that Colonel Baillie was inclined to give greater importance to the Kukas as a body than they are worthy of. He puts down the numbers, who have joined the Panth about 1,50,000 whereas as my belief is that if they were now registered, the number would fall much under 50,000."
2. *Census of India 1901: The Punjab, its Feudatories and North-West Frontier Providence*, Vol. VII, Pt. I, Simla, 1902, p. 79; *Census of India: The Punjab and Delhi*, Vol. XV, Lahore, 1923, p. 185; *Census of India 1931: Punjab*, Vol. XVII, Pt. I, Lahore, 1933, p. 309.

3. Jaswinder Singh, *Kukus of Note in the Punjab: Document-1881*, Namdhari Darbar, Bhaini Sahib, Ludhiana, 1984.
4. Op. Cit., pp 7-123: The list of noted and influential Kukas of Districts of Punjab Province provide their addresses, occupations and official comments. From the occupation of Namdhari follower we can deduce his caste. Similarly, we can deduce the approximate percentage of each occupational caste.
5. This police list of prominent Namdharis shows the following distribution : Cultivator-109, Lambardar-18 Carpentar 14 Miscellaneous (occupation show in each case) 74, None-38 Total-253. See Appendix-H
6. W.H. Mcleod, "The Kukas a Millenarian sect of the Punjab," *The Punjab Past and Present* (ed. Ganda Singh) Vol-XIII, Punjabi University Patiala, April 1979, pp. 180-84.
7. The harvests of 1858 were reduced and during 1860-61 the Punjab experienced a serious famine. This was followed by another period of acute scarcity in 1869-70; SS, Thornburn, *The Punjab in Peace and War*, Edinburgh and London,1904, pp. 232-33.
8. Richard G. *Lions of the Punjab Culture in the Making*, Archives Publishers, New Delhi 1987, pp. 105-130; J.S. Grewal, *The Akalis: A Short History*, Punjab Studies Publications, Chandigarh, 196, pp. 12-50.
9. Prominent followers in the Malwa region were as follows in 1867 and 1881

District	1867	1881
Ambala	12	09
Ludhiana	05	152
Ferozepur	37	17
Patiala, Nabha, Jind	39	N.A.
Total	93	178;

see, Nahar Singh, *Gooroo Ram Singh and Kuka Sikhs: Documents*, Vol. I, pp. 38-46.

10. Bhaini Sahib is located in Ludhiania District in few miles from the boundary of the neighboring Jalandhar District. For the year 1855, 1869 and 1881 the figures for the population density of Ludhiana District were respectively 383,429,450 and for Jalandhar division (The division includes both districts) of these Sikhs 72.7 percent belonged to agricultural castes, more than 60 percent of total being Jats with the remaining 12 percent distributed amongst Sainis, Rajputs and Kambohs, 14.5 percent belonged to artisan one percent came from mercantile castes: *Gazetteer of the Ludhiana District* 1888-89, pp. 92, 139.
11. Jaswinder Singh, pp. 12-72.
12. Op. Cilt, pp. 37, 28.
13. Nahar Singh, p 37.

14. Jaswinder Singh, pp 76-78.
15. Yogindra Bali and Kalika Bali, *The Warriors in White-Glimpse of Kooka History*, Har-Anand Publications, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 105-06.
16. Nahar Singh, pp 45-46.
17. Nahar Singh, pp. 38-48: in the areas of Central Punjab the number of prominent followers were as follow in 1867 and 1881:

Distt	1867	1881
Jalandhar	48	08
Hosiharpur	02	02
Gurdaspur	07	05
Amritsar	5	10
Lahore	N.A.	14
Total	110	39

18. Jaswinder Singh, pp 38-48.
19. Joginder Singh, *The Sikh Resurgence*, National Book Organization, New Delhi, 1997, p 16.
20. Ibid, pp 17-18.
21. Nahar Singh, p 42.
22. Jaswinder Singh, pp 82-83.
23. Ibid, 86-87.
24. Yogenderd Bali, Kalika Bali, p. 106, see, also, Nahar Singh, p 42.
25. Jaswinder Singh, pp. 92-93.
26. Nahar Singh, pp. 38-100.
27. Jaswinder Singh, pp 89-92
28. Ibid., pp 94-100.
29. See, Nahar Singh, pp. 38-44: in Western Punjab the number of Prominent Namdharis activists was as follow:

Distt	1867	1881
Sailkot	12	09
Gujranwala	35	18
Rawalpandi	03	01
Total	50	28

30. Jaswinder Singh, pp 109-14.
31. Nahar Singh, pp 44-45.
32. Jaswinder Singh, Documents-1881, 118-120.

33. Nahar Singh *Documents*-Vol. I, 44.
34. Jaswinder Singh, *Documents*, Vol. I, 44.
35. *Satjug*, July 1939, pp 8-30.
36. Ibid.
37. *Satjug*, Dec-1939, p 10.
38. Celebrating *holla* festival was started by Namdhari Guru Ram Singh in 1866. He performed 6 *hollas* from 1866-1871. Namdhari Guru Hari Singh organized 8 *hollas* from 1899 to 1906. Namdhari Guru Partap Singh arranged 54 *hollas* at different places. Beant Kaur, *Sat Guru Partap Singhji atay Hollay Mohallay*, pp 32-34.
39. *Ibid*, p 34.
40. The process of agricultural colonization commenced in the western Punjab from 1885, and it continued upto the final years of British rule. The colonization projects were based on the construction of the network of canals that took off from the rivers, with branches and distributaries spread over that flat, alluvial plains of the Western Punjab. This made possible the migration into this area of people from other parts of Punjab. *The Punjab Under Imperialism* (Imran Ali), 1885-1947, Oxford University Press Delhi, 1989,p 8.
41. *Satjug*, July 1939, p 16.
42. Ibid.
43. Satish Saberwal, *Mobile Men: Limits to Social Change in Urban Punjab*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1978, pp. 101-3.
44. On the advise of the Namdhari Guru, most of the families migrated from Pakistan in August 1947. A majority of the Namdharis did not have the direct impact of partition and they could not be treated as partition suffers: *Arvind Sahgal, Assimilation of an Ethinic Group: A Case Study of Namdhari Mandi Town in Hamachal Pardesh*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Punjab University, Chandigarh, 1990, pp 93-94.
45. Rawelsar is a place very near to Mandi, Amar Bharti, *Alah Varson Menh*, Manpreet Parkshan, Delhi, 1999, p. 39.
46. Arvind Sehgal, *Assimilation of an Ethnic Group*, 95-96, see, *Khalsa Samachar*, February 29, 1940, pp 4,7.
47. See, Joginder Singh, "Pattern of Migration and Resettlement of Namdhari Sikh of Punjab: A Case Study of Jalandhar City", *Sixty-Seventh Session of Indian History Congress*, Farook College, Calicut University, Kerala, 10-12 March 2007.
48. The process of Sikh immigration from Punjab to various destinations has reflected changing conditions in Punjab and changing opportunities abroad. Rural indebtedness, population pressures, natural disasters, and political

unrest have commonly been identified as among the push factors causing Sikhs to leave Punjab. Since 1940 Sikh migration in the face of changing social, economic, and political conditions in Punjab. Subsequently, the social consequences of economic development in Punjab have served to further stimulate migration. *The Sikh Diaspora: Migration and Experience Beyond Punjab*, N.G. Barrier & Verne and Dusenbury (ed)., Chankya Publications, Delhi 1989p 7.

48. *Satjug, Siam Ank*, June, 1962, p 12-13.
49. *Satjug, Siam Ank*, June, 1962. p 13.
50. Ibid, p 14
51. Ibid, p 15 see also, Taran Singh Vehmi, *Jas-Jiwan-II*, Hisar, 1974 pp 302-315
52. See Appendix —I
53. *Satjug*, June 1962, p 55, 58, 86, 97-100
54. Sucheta Mazumder " Colonial Impact and Punjab Emigration to United States" *Labour Immigration under Capitalism: Asian Workers in the United States Before World War II* (ed Lucie Cheng and Edna Benacich) University of California Press, Berkelay, 1984, 316-36. also see Pashaura Singh & N.G. Barrier (ed), *The Transmission of Sikh Heritage in the Diaspora*, Manohar, and New Delhi, 1996, p 227-53.
55. *Satjug-Da-Africa Ank*, September 1959, p 51, 73; see also, Beant Kaur, *Sat Guru Partap Singh Ji Atay Hollay Mohallay*, New Delhi, 1991, pp 149-50.
56. *Satjug Africa* Ank Sept-1959, p. 56.
57. Ibid.
58. *Satug*, 22 magh 1986 (1929.A.D) pp10-40; also see, Jaswant Singh Jas, *Baba Ram Singh Namdhari*, Kasturi Lal &Sons,Amritsar 1958,p17
59. Nahar Singh, *Guru Ram Singh and the Kuka Sikhs*, p. 79, also, see, Appendix—C.
60. Fauja Singh, *Kuka Movement*, Motilal Banarsi-Dass Delhi, 1965, p. 34.
61. Dalip Singh Namdhari, *Gatha Sutantarta Sangram Di*, Namdhari Darbar, Bhaini Sahib, 2002, pp. 111-112.
62. Atma Singh Sankhatrvi ; *Sri Nànak Raj Namdhari Darbar*, Bhaini Sahib 1997, pp. 253-54
63. Gurmit Singh *Sant Khalsa*, Sirsa, 1978, pp. 745-77.
64. Ibid, also, see, Jaswinder Singh and Tara Singh Anjan (eds) *Vad Partap Singh Achraj Roop*, Delhi 1990, pp 61-62, Taran Singh Vehmi, *Jas Jiwan*, Vol. I, Bhaini Shaib, 1970, p. 62.
65. Ibid.

66. Nahar Singh, *Namdhari Sangat*, Delhi, p. 19, also see, Bakshi Singh Adil, *Namdhari Sangat*, Naveen Parkashan, Delhi, 1983, p. 97.

67. For detail, see, Pritam Singh Kavi, *Mehma Bhaini Sahib Di*, Bhaini Sahib, Ludhiana, 2000, pp 18-22.

68. Other trusties are: S. H S. Hanspal (ex MP), S. Surinder Singh Manchanda, S. Jagdish Singh Waryam, S. Ajit Singh Namdhari, Suba Harbhajan Singh, Suba Surinder Kaur Kharal, S. Narinder Singh Khurana

69. From Ludhiana to Katani road is known as Satguru Ram Singh Ji Marg

    Ludhiana to Sangrur via Malerkotla road is known as Namdhari Shaheedi Marg

    Khana to Malerkotla road is known as Namdhari Shaheedi Marg.

    At Malerkotla, a chowk is named after Namdhari Shaheedi Chowk.

    Chowk at Dholewala in Ludhiana is named after Satguru Partap Singh Chowk.

    Satguru Ram Singh Municipal Park is also in Ludhiana.

    In Delhi, Kirti Nagar (Lakad Mandi) road is named after Satguru Ram Singh Marg and link road between

    Rashtarpati Bhawan and South Avenue is named after Mai Hukami Marg.

70. Sawaran Singh Snehi, "Kukas as they Live" *Nirikhak* (ed. Dalip Singh Namdhari), Namdhari Vidiyak Jatha, Ludhiana, March 1980, pp 30-33.

71. For detail of the Subas as well as the area of the activities -see appendix-C

72. *Satjug*: *Saim Ank*, June 1962, 14, 50 -51 also *Satjug*: *Africa Ank*, September 1959,56

73. Taran Singh Vehmi, *Jas Jiwan-I* Jiwan Nagar, 1970, 286.

74. Some of the prominent members of the *Parcharak Jathebandi* were Sant Teja Singh, Pt. Gopal Singh Sant Karam Singh, Balam, Sant Gian Singh Veeroke, Sant Fauja Singh Bundala, Jeon Singh Kavisher of Valtoha, Sant Bahal Singh, Kavishar Singh Rode, Sant Massa Singh of Chogawan, Sewa Singh Bhagta, Assa Singh Bairagi, Inder Singh Gill, Achhar Singh Bhagthane, Pritam Singh Delhi, Darshan Singh Delhi, Sant Dalip Singh of Sant Nagar, Niranjan Singh Sant Nagar, Amar Singh Nakorha, Sher Singh. Bhagorhia Wali, Dharam Singh Moroan Wale, Tehal Singh, Sant Dasuha, Jathedar Waryam Singh of Panjhatha. June 1959, 25, 27, see also Tarn Singh Vehmi, Jas Jiwan-II, 212.

75. *Satjug*, June 1959,25

76. Karam Singh Kapoor, *Sat Guru Partap Singh: Ek Mahan Satguru*, Navyug Press, New Delhi, 1971, 83.

77. For detail, see, Appendix-H

78. *Satjug*:1959, 40 (2016 samat). See, also *Satjug*, Sept 1938. *Satjug*, July 1939, 1-5.

79. Namdhari Darbar's meeting at Holla Mohalla of Gill Sheikhupur in 1945. For detail, see, Beant Kaur, *Sat Guru Partap Singh Atey Holley Mohalley*, p. 92.

80. Resolution passed at the meeting of the Namdhari Darbar held at Sailkot on 1939 *ibid*, p. 78.

81. Bhagat Singh, "The Kuka movement" *The Punjab Past And Present*, Vol. VIII, pt- (ed. Ganda Singh), Punjabi University Patiala, April 1973, 148-55

82. "Kirtan; the laudatory recital, verbal and literary of the name and qualities of a person. It technical meaning consists in the repeated utterance of name. Of the nine modes of *bhakti* or devotions, Kirtan is the second. In a still more technical sense it means a variety of devotional music used in singing the name or praise of the lord": *A Glossary of Indian Religious Terms and Concepts*. (Narendra Nath Bhatta charyra), Manohar, Delhi 1999, pp 85-86.

83. For detail, see, Pashaura Singh, *The Guru Granth Sahib*, O.U.P, 2000, pp. 269-270, Rattan Singh Jaggi, *Guru Granth Vishavkosh*, Pt. L., Punjabi University, Patiala, 2002, pp. 340-42.

84. Mir Chhabila Mushki and Nath Mall were leading *dhadis* of the time of Guru Gobind Singh: *Encyclopeadia of Sikhism*, (ed. Harbans Singh), Vol. I, Punjab University, Patiala, 1995, pp. 563-64.

85. For detail, see, *Mahan Noor: Sri Satguru Partap Singh* ji Navyug Publishers Delhi, 1999, pp 197-238; Jaswant Singh Jas, *Baba Ram Singh Namdhari*, Kasturi Lal and Sons, Amritsar, p. 17.

86. *Mahan Noor: Sri Satguru Partap Singh Ji*, pp. 197-98.

87. 'Rabab' was a musical instrument which was played upon by Bhai Mardana who accompanied Guru Nanak Dev: Rattan Singh Jaggi; *Guru Granth Vishvakosh*, Vol II, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2002, p 413.

88. For detail, see, Jaswinder Singh (ed.), *Beant Patshah*, Namdhari Darbar, Bhaini Sahib, 1996, pp 127-157.

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CHAPTER—V
EPILOGUE

The Namdhari Gurus worked out their mission on the basis of the *Adi-Granth, Dasam Granth, rahit-namas, Prem-Sumarag* and *Sakhi* literature. Primary emphasis of their mission was on the *nam-simran,* moral and ethical values. The Namdhari Gurus exhorted their followers to give up futile rituals and customs and indulgences and earn livelihood by honest means. They evolved *rahit-maryada* on the basis of above mentioned Sikh *granths* and *rahit-namas* and exhorted their followers to observe it. Namdhari Guru Balak Singh established his centre of propagation at Hazro District Attock. The impact of his mission was considerable among the local Khatri and Arora Sikhs. One of his successors, Namdhari Guru Ram Singh established another centre of propagation at his own village Bhaini Aryian, District Ludhiana. He extended the scope of mission of his predecessor in terms of revival of the Khalsa traditions. He formed Sant Khalsa in 1857 and evolved its *rahit-maryada* for rejuvenating a new social order and restoring the Khalsa raj. He invoked Sikh religion and its tradition for legitimizing his mission. He challenged the then traditional leaders and priestly class who had appropriated Sikhism and control and management of the historical gurdwaras. These leaders and priestly class enjoyed, the patronage of the British raj.

To encounter the temporal might of Sodhis, Bedis, Mahants and Pujaris, the Namdhari Guru Ram Singh asserted that his Sant Khalsa was Guru Gobind Singh's creation and his own mission was divine mission. Giani Gian Singh, a Nirmala scholar, imagined that Namdhari Gurus Balak Singh and Ram Singh were the messengers of God and sent to purify the degenerated human-beings. Their appearance brought an immense relief to the common

people. Giani Gian Singh further imagined that spiritual master Ram Singh was the incarnation of Guru Gobind Singh and dedicated to the liberation of mankind. The Tenth Master sent him to re-unite the human-beings with Almighty and liberate them from their temporal stranglehold and social evils. Moreover, Giani Gian Singh makes us to believe that the contemporary traditional Sikh leaders represented the cause of the rich people and used the religious places for their vested interests. On the other hand, Namdhari Guru Ram Singh brought out the contradictions between the temporal and spiritual lords. He asserted that the struggle between two lords was going on since Guru Nanak Dev's times. The temporal lords were represented by Malik Bhago whereas Guru Nanak Dev stood with Bhai Lalo. The Namdhari Sikhs did not 'owe their allegiance to the Hindu temples, places of pilgrimage, the *Purans*, the *Sadhus* or *Brahmins* and *Pujaris*.'

The official reports inform us that the Namdhari mission assumed political overtones under Namdhari Guru Ram Singh who was addressed as 'Padshah' or Chiniwala Padshah by his followers. The official reports further inform us that the Namdhari Guru cherished the restoration of the Khalsa raj which collapsed due to the moral depravity of the Sikh Sardars. The power and wealth had corrupted them and eroded their commitment to sustain the Khalsa raj. He formed Sant Khalsa to restore that commitment. He formed suba-system, imparted martial training and emphasized the *nam-simran* for strengthening the Sant Khalsa physically and spiritually. He deputed the *Subas* and *Jathedars* for performing *sabad-kirtan* in the villages. He introduced the collective singing known as *halle-de-diwans* which generated a spirit of cohesion among his followers and dispelled their fear of contemporary authorities. The collective singing also made them free from the stranglehold of *pirs*, *babas*, *sadhus* and *sianas*. The Namdhari Sikhs became bold enough to defy the beliefs and practices of these religious leaders. They also defied authorities when the latter hurt the religious 'sentiments'.

Namdhari Guru Ram Singh was the first traditional leader to respond, though in religious idiom, to the social problems of the Sikh peasantry and artisan classes. His bold attack on infanticide, dowry and widow-burning was actually an attack on the people of upper classes as they practised these evils. The lower order of the society emulated them. As a consequence, the common Sikhs, like their counterparts, too became victims of these evils. Unable to afford expenses of dowry, they killed daughters which became an inhuman escape mechanism or they remained singles which often generated moral laxity. The founding of army cantonments around the towns of Punjab further bred immorality in the society. The Namdhari Guru himself noted that the Khalsa of Lahore Kingdom was the victim of prostitution and sodomy. He thought that the compulsory marriages could reduce the ignominious living or remove the social stigma. He made taboo for the Namdhari congregation to keep itself away from the morally depraved persons. He further made taboo for the Namdhari Sikhs not to remain singles. With the introduction of *anand-riti* and mass-marriages without dowry it became easier for these Sikhs to go for a married life. The Namdhari Guru vigorously carried on the Khalsa *rahit* of 18th century but with a difference. The *rahit-namas* of this century were not free from the stranglehold of Brahamanical practices whereas the Namdhari *maryada* was largely free from such practices.

Committed to the Khalsa raj, the Namdhari Guru and his followers could not reconcile with the British *raj* and its allies. They craved for the restoration of the Khalsa raj. Giani Gian Singh simply says that 'all of them fondly cherished the desire for political power'. The Namdhari Sikhs themselves circulated the extracts of the *Sau-sakhis* imagining the reestablishment of the Khalsa rule. They also owned the cause of Maharaja Dalip Singh who sought to take back the Sikh Sovereign State which was wrongfully annexed by the British. Through the extracts of the *Sau-sakhis*, the Namdhari Sikhs reassured themselves and the

people around them that in the house of a carpenter, Guru Gobind Singh shall take birth in the form of Ram Singh who will drive British across the Jumna River. Moreover, correspondence shared between the Namdhari Guru and Russian Tzar through Suba Gurbachan Singh and Suba Bishan Singh makes absolutely clear that the Namdhari Guru made every diplomatic and military efforts to prepare thousands of the Namdhari Sikhs to fight out British for the restoration of the Khalsa raj.[1] Above all, the letters written by the Namdhari Guru from aboard show that he exhorted his successor and followers to reject and oppose the raj at socio-cultural level too.

The confrontation of the Namdhari Sikhs over the issue of cow-slaughter was the consequence of anti-colonial acculturation by the Namdhari Guru. It showed that the orientation of the Namdhari Sikhs in the Khalsa tradition of 18th century, if allowed to carry on for some years more, could be dangerous for the entrenchment of the British raj. The local British administrative personnel, setting aside norms of the civil rule, executed 66 Kukas ruthlessly. For the British, the elimination of *Kukaism* was absolutely essential for strengthening props of the raj. Among these props, the Sikh landed aristocracy and traditional religious leaders figured prominently. These props themselves felt a threat from *Kukaism*. They called Namdhari Sikhs a wicked sect and asked the government to crush it with heavy hand. Similarly, they called Maharaja Dalip Singh a false pretender when he claimed himself the real successor of the Sikh Sovereign State and made an attempt to get it back from the British. The rapprochement between the British and these props prompted the leaders of the Singh Sabha movement to build up an alternative loyalist culture subsequently.

For half a century, the contribution of the Namdhari Sikhs to the struggle against the British raj and their programme of social reforms was not noticed by the leadership of the Sikh and Hindu organisations. However, in early 20th century, political

scenario changed in favour of the Namdhari Sikhs. Namdhari Guru Partap Singh broadened the scope of ideology of his predecessors and identified the Namdhari Sikhs with the nationalist forces like Congress and Socialists. Simultaneously, he tried to identify the Namdhari Sikhs with some Hindu organizations. The Namdhari scholars and activists interpreted Sikhism in terms of Vedantic philosophy, appropriated Hindu mythology and declared that the Sikh Gurus were the protectors of the Hindus. Inspite of it, it was left to the founders of the Ghadar movement and later on to the leaders of left-wing organizations to appreciate patriotic and nationalist overtones of the Kuka movement. Those kukas who were executed by the British in 1871-72 were remembered as 'martyrs' as they carried on an 'anti imperialist movement'. Namdhari Guru Ram Singh was also seen as the protagonist of the Non-Cooperation movement. Moreover, he was declared as the fore-runner of Mahatma Gandhi and of Swadeshi movement. The Namdhari Sikhs got this recognition as they participated in the national movement. Moreover, the Indian revolutionaries and nationalists were welcomed at Bhaini Sahib headquarters. The intra-party interaction of the Namdhari Sikhs broadened their sectarian outlook. They took note of the political and economic issues involved in the struggle for freedom. Their spiritual lord Partap Singh organized several communitarian and national meetings. The Congress leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Rajindra Prasad eulogized the Namdhari Gurus and Sikhs for rendering valuable services to the cause of *Bharat Mata*.

Simultaneously, Namdhari Guru Partap Singh was seized of the factionalism among the Sikhs of different religious and political affiliations. He organised a conference of Sikh organizations and made special appeals to their leaders to sink their mutual differences in the wake of communal threat posed by the separatist politics of the Muslim League. Noting the inevitability of the partition of Punjab, the Namdhari Guru asked his followers to quit west Punjab and reach east Punjab.

Meanwhile, he perceived declaration of independence merely a transfer of power. He thought that the transfer of power could free Indians from the political slavery but the ugly scars of poverty and hunger, communal tension and violence were yet to be addressed.

II

Under the aegis of its *Satguru* Jagjit Singh, the Namdhari community can now take pride to have its own headquarters Bhaini Sahib comprising buildings and halls for religious, social, cultural and organizational purposes. Moreover, for conducting temporal and spiritual affairs, he has revamped the hierarchy of the Namdhari organization. On his behalf, more than thirty three *Subas* are looking after the community-affairs in Punjab alone. In terms of representation of *Subas*, Malwa region of Punjab State is ahead of Doaba and Majha regions. However, the representation of *Subas* and other local leaders is determined by the historical, administrative and demographic exigencies. Haryana State is represented by the four *Subas* for the simple reason that Sri Jiwan Nagar in Sirsa District came into being as headquarters with modern infrastructure. There are several villages in this district which have major concentration of the Namdhari Sikhs (largely agriculturists who came from Pakistan in 1946-47). Similarly, the Namdhari artisans, businessmen and professional have also migrated to the towns and cities of India in since 1947. The capital of India, New Delhi, has emerged an important centre of religio-political activities of the Namdhari community. Several Namdhari leaders and functionaries come from Delhi alone. The representation has also been given to the Namdhari *sangats* of Jammu (J & K) and Mandi (Himachal Pradesh). Majority of these Namdhari Sikhs are migrants from Pakistan. Substantial number of Namdhari Sikhs are found in the towns and cities of U.P. A few *Subas* represent these Namdhari Sikhs. Besides, several *Subas* represent the Namdhari-Sikhs of Thailand, Kenya, Canada and England. The Namdhari Guru recongnised their significant

contribution (largely financial) and has built up rapport with the local Namdhari Sikhs of these countries. Majority of these Namdhari Sikhs belong to Khatri, Arora and Ramgharia castes.

In Punjab, the Namdhari Guru controls and guides the local leaders and functionaries in regard to the socio-religious and cultural affairs of his community. The *Subas* are the top leaders of district organization. They are assisted by the *Pradhans* operating in urban and rural areas of the district. Next to them are *Jathedars*, secretaries and cashiers of the local units including the Vishava Namdhari Vidyak Jatha and Istri Vidyak Jatha. There are also *mahants*, *sants* and *babas* preaching the Namdhari mission in their own areas. The duties and functions of these leaders include making arrangements for holding religious congregations and performing *havans* and *jap parjogs*. They also make arrangements for transporting the local sangats to Bhaini Sahib headquarters whenever the festivals and fairs are held there. Moreover, they also make arrangements for the collection of funds, especially *dasvand*, a voluntary contribution.

The local leaders as well as the influential members of this community strive for promoting communal cohesion and harmony which is, sometimes, marred by the civil disputes among the Namdhari families. Most of these disputes relate to the property and breakdown of relationship between husband and wife. If approached by the aggrieved members or party, the *Suba* or *Pardhan* try to resolve issues amicably. In case of dead lock, the matter is resolved either by the spiritual master himself or his appointees. Primary intention of the leadership is to avoid litigation.

The local leadership maintains liaison with the Namdhari Guru and administrative personnel of Bhaini Sahib headquarters. Among the prominent administrative personnel are Sant Kashmir Singh Bhinder, Sant Daljit Singh Dhaliwal, Sant Gurdial Singh Raisar, Sant Chanan Singh. Sewak Rachhpal Singh and Sewak Harpal Singh are personal attendants of *Satguru* who assist him to carry on the day to day schedule. They also take care of his

personal requirements. Both are well versed in the Namdhari traditions and maryada. Sant Jagtar Singh, Sant Avtar Singh, Sewak Didar Singh, Sant Harvendra Singh Hanspal and Sant Surinder Singh Namdhari hold special status in the administrative hierarchy of the Namdhari community. Sant Harvendra Singh Hanspal is President of the Namdhari Darbar. He is also the Chief Editor of *Satjug*. He is former Congress MP of Rajya Sabha (for two times) and President of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee. Sant Surinder Singh is Senior Vice-President of Namdhari Darbar, Vice-Chairman of Namdhari Martyrs Memorial Trust, General Attorney of Satguru Jagjit Singh and Director of Satguru Partap Singh Apollo Hospital, Ludhiana. Late Sant Dalip Singh was Secretary of Namdhari Darbar and Chairman of Satguru Partap Singh Academy, Bhaini Sahib, had left an indelible mark on the contemporary history of the Namdhari community. Bibi Sukhjit Kaur, Suba Surinder Kaur Kharal (Trustee of Kuka Martyrs Memorial Trust & Namdhari writer) and Bibi Kulwant Kaur are prominent Namdhari activists and functionaries of the Vishav Namdhari Vidyak Jatha. Suba Balwinder Singh is the President of this Jatha. Besides, there are several Namdhari scholars and writers. Prominent among them are Sant Jagdish Singh, editor, *Waryam*, a monthly Punjabi magazine published from Jalandhar, Tara Singh Anjan, Jaswinder Singh historian, Kirpal Singh Kasel, S.S. Virk and Sawaran Singh Snehi. They have made an important contribution to the study of the Namdhari traditions, institutions, literature (Punjabi) and history.

For the contemporary Namdhari Sikhs, *Satguru* is their spiritual and temporal master. They believe that he is the only one who can judge right and wrong actions and command them to lead their life accordingly. They feel blessed for they have true spiritual master who can liberate them from sufferings and sorrows. They take sufferings and sorrows as the will of *Satguru* who is the saviour of human beings. It is with the grace of *Satguru* that they seek spiritual quest and attain bliss. Moreover, they believe that their *Satguru* is *bakhshanhar* (forgiver) and atones their sins.

According to their *Satguru*'s command, the Namdhari Sikhs observe *maryada*. Primary attributes of this *maryada* are daily *nam simran*, earning livelihood by honest means, piety and teetotalism. After taking full bath, puritan Namdhari Sikhs meditate on the name of God in the early morning. As early as 1940, Namdhari Guru Partap Singh obliged his followers to perform *nam simran* only for an hour daily. However, they are free to recite *nam shabad* with rosary in their hands whenever they wish to do that. Majority of the Namdhari Sikhs only meditate in the early morning and then carry on their routine work in the rest of the day. They also participate in the collective congregations called *jap paryog*, *varni* and *havan* arranged by the local leadership on certain days (preferably on Thursday and Sunday). Periodically *melas* (socio-religious festivals) particularly *asu da-mela* are also organised at Bhaini Sahib headquarters in which thousands of Namdhari Sikhs from distant villages and towns participate.

On all occasions of joys and sorrows, the Namdhari Sikhs arrange *path* (reading) of the *Adi-Granth*. The scripture-readers perform this job within seven days. The *Adi-Granth* is placed in a room or place after cleaning or washing it. The family-members, kiths and kins listen *path* attentively. At the end, *vak* (receiving guru's word or command from the *Adi-Granth*) is taken and *ardas* is performed. Then sacramental food (*karah parsad*) is distributed. The divan is also held for *shabad-kirtan*. For performing *akhand-path*, elaborate arrangements are made. The orthodox Namdhari-Sikhs known as *Sodhis* perform this job. Most of the Sodhis stay at Bhaini Sahib. The date for performing *path* or *akhand- path* is arranged according to the availability of these *Sodhis*. The well-water is arranged in a big quantity for drinking and washing (the tap-water is not used). Similarly, other *samagari* (ration) is arranged in advance. However, utmost attention is given to the mode of cooking and serving food. Performing *akhand-path* even *sadharan path* has become an expensive ritual.

The Namdhari Sikhs perform rituals related to birth, marriage and death in accordance to their own *maryada*. Yet they are not totally free from the customs of *zat-biradri* to which they belong. A birth of a child (boy) is celebrated by distributing sweets (*lodoos*). After thirteen days, mother of the child resumes the kitchen work with some ceremony which is known as *chaunke charna*. The puritan Namdhari Sikhs initiate both mother and child and name to the child which is known as *namkaran* ceremony. Sometimes, kiths and kins are invited on this occasion. *Langar* is served in the end. Similarly, they solemnize marriage by *anand-riti*. As per the commands of *Satguru*, parents are suppose to perform this ritual at Bhaini Sahib alone. The parents, in consultation with local leaders or nearers or dearers, propose boy or girl and seek *Satguru*'s approval. They fill up a performa designed by the Vishav Namdhari Sangat, Bhaini Sahib. The performa records their names, occupation, *gotra* of their paternal and maternal homes; dates of birth, height and qualifications of girl and boy. The parents give undertaking that they have not given or received dowry and commit no violation of commands of *Sri Satguru*. The Vishav Namdhari Sangat certify that both boy and girl are of stipulated age, *gurmukh* in appearance and can recite *ardas*. The sangat also ensures that the families are not close relatives. A *Suba* and two responsible persons also certify the above mentioned antecedents. Before solemnizing *anand-riti*, the parents perform *sehaj paths* at their respective houses or at Bhaini Sahib. However, it is not mandatory. In case, *path* is to be performed at Bhaini Sahib they deposit some amount. The *anand-riti* is solemnized individually or collectively. The mass marriages are arranged periodically.

Ideally speaking, the Namdhari Sikhs perceive death of a person as Almighty's will and avoid breast beating and loud wailing. However, in actual practice, the nearers and dearers of the deceased person often give way to their emotional outburst. According to the Namdhari maryada, the deceased person is given full bath and administered *amrit*. Pyre is raised keeping head of

the dead towards Pol-Star. Ashes are collected in a bag and thrown into flowing water. The Namdhari Sikhs do not go to any marked places like Haridwar or Kiratpur or Goindwal for disposing of remains of the deceased persons. They perform a *path* either at local dharamsala or Bhaini Sahib.

With the passage of time, the orthodox Namdhari *maryada* is being supplanted by the western life style among a section of this community. A unique look of a Namdhari-Sikh in the *kurta-pajama* and round turban made of white cloth has been partly replaced by the western dress. However, mass-gatherings of the Namdhari-Sikhs at Bhaini Sahib give assurance of continuity of their customary dress. Similarly, the Namdhari women of recent generation have temptation for modern fashion and use cosmetics and jewellary against the wishes of their *Satguru*. Television media has made in roads into the Namdhari-families too. They view television in spite of its prohibition. Moreover, the boys and daughters of the orthodox Namdhari parents, when married into non-Namdhari families, quickly deviate from the Namdhari-maryada as the latter ask the former to conduct *anand riti* according to the popular maryada of the Sikhs (SGPC) and also arrange marriage parties etc. However, number of such cases are marginal.

III

In the post-independence period, the Namdhari Guru Jagjit Singh and his followers are committed to carry on the legacy of the national movement which stood for "a commitment to political and economic independence, modern economic development, the ending the inequality, oppression and domination in all forms" and "promotion of the processes of nation-in-the-making on the basis of joyous acceptance of the diversity".[2] They are conscious of the fact that the remembering the sacrifices of the Indian nationalists and revolutionaries could play an important role in the process of the national integration which was badly fractured by the Partition of Punjab and communal violence. In his religious discourses, Namdhari Guru Jagjit Singh often reminds his followers

that it is their moral obligation to carry on the legacy of the struggle of his predecessors. Being born and brought up at Bhaini Sahib headquarters, Namdhari Guru Jagjit Singh had several opportunities to meet and interact with the Indian nationalists and revolutionaries who came to this place to take shelter. He remembered the sayings of his father Satguru Partap Singh who thought of his moral and religious obligations to take care of the Indian nationalists and revolutionaries. Namdhari Guru Jagjit Singh felt that he was duty-bound to carry on this Namdhari tradition. During the early years of his pontification, he met some old revolutionaries who were in distress. In one of his religious discourses, he cited the example of Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna who stayed at Bhaini Sahib for some time. The Namdhari Guru held a long talk with him and found that Bhakna was quite perturbed to see the poverty and hunger in the society. The Namdhari Guru himself shared the agony of this old revolutionary. Both of them felt as if the dream of worth living society had been shattered. [3]

Inspite of such experiences, the Namdhari Guru and his followers aligned with the Congress which ruled the Government of India and the many State governments. They believed that India had made good progress under the stewardship of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and his daughter Indira Gandhi. They also appreciated the liberal politics of the Congress which had been accommodating the people of diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. For these achievements, they gave credit to the Nehru-family. Moreover, long back, they admired Smt. Indira Gandhi for having guts to fight back adverse circumstances. The Namdhari Guru noted that when she lost her son, Sanjay Gandhi, in an air crash in June 1980, she did not allow her emotional grief to overcome the responsibilities of a political leader. However, the Namdhari Guru thought that the imposing emergency on India was a mistake. Indira Gandhi got the support of the Namdhari Sikhs in the electoral politics.[4] On number of occasions, they

refused to oblige the Congress when the latter wanted to use them against its opponents in the religo-politics of Punjab.[5]

The Namdhari Gurus have had been votaries of the communal harmony and world peace. Whenever they felt that communal harmony was disturbed, they persuaded the people to avoid communal violence and resolve issues amicably. The communal violence broke out in Punjab when Master Tara Singh launched *morcha* for *Punjabi Suba.* It was encountered by the Jan Sangha, the protagonists of Maha Punjab. Being a protagonist of Punjabi language, the Namdhari Guru made a passionate appeal to the Hindus that they should recognize Punjabi language as their mother tongue. He told the Hindus that he appreciated the relevance of Hindi language. Whenever he got a letter in Hindi language, he loved to answer in the same language. He reminded the Hindus and Sikhs that they belonged to the same stock (race) and were twin-brothers of the same mother. With the passage of time, the religious beliefs and practices of the Sikhs became distinct from the Hindus. He advised them to resolve the linguistic issue amicably. The Namdhari Guru himself did not see anything wrong if the formation of the *Punjabi Suba* could turn the Sikhs into a majority community in Punjab. Dispelling the apprehensions of the Hindus, he said that the Punjabi *suba* was going to be one of the Indian provinces. In the rest of the provinces, the Hindus were in the majority.[6] However, the Namdhari Guru's sane voice fell on the deaf ears of the communalists.[7]

The communal harmony was again disturbed by the clash between adherents of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and the Akhand Kirtani Jatha on the one hand and the Sant Nirankaris on the other on 13th April 1978, at Amritsar. The clash left 16 dead. Among them four belonged to the Damdami Taksal and the rest of them were the members of the Akhand Kirtani Jatha. Both the Damdami Taksal and the Akhand Kirtani Jatha were protesting against the vilification campaign of the Sant Nirankaris against the Sikh Gurus and Sikhism. They asked Parkash Singh Badal,

the then Chief Minister, Punjab Government, not to allow the Sant Nirankaris to hold their annual congregation at Amritsar. It was alleged by the Dam Dami Taksal and the Akhand Kirtani Jatha that Parkash Singh wilted under the pressure of Jan Sangha, the partner of Badal Government. Nevertheless, this tragedy subsequently generated communal antagonism and violence in the towns of the Punjab.[8]

In the wake of communal division among the Congress, Akali and the Jan Sangha parties of Punjab, the Punjab Communist leaders took initiative to restore communal harmony. The Namdhari Gurus (Partap Singh and Jagjit Singh) appreciated the secular and liberal politics of the Communist leaders. The latter organized a meeting of All Parties Conference at Desh Bhagat Yadgar Hall, Jalandhar. Five to six hundred workers and activists of different political parties participated. About 50 Namdhari Sikhs also attended the meeting. Comrade Sohan Singh Josh presided over the meeting. After deliberating the issues related to the communal antagonism and violence, Comrade Avtar Singh Malhotra moved a resolution urging the people of religious majority community to refrain from doing injustice to the people of religious minority community. The resolution also appealed to these people to rise above the sectarian considerations.[9]

The Namdhari-Comrade rapport was established when Namdhari Guru Partap Singh responded to the socialist ideas in 1930s. A few Namdhari Sikhs became members of the socialist organizations. This rapport still continues. Several Comrades, Marxist and liberal writers often visit Bhaini Sahib headquarters. In appreciation for promoting liberal and humanitarian heritage, the Namdhari Gurus too give financial support to them. Namdhari Guru Jagjit Singh believes that the comrades are rendering services to the uplift of the down trodden.

During the course of the Sikh militancy, the Namdhari Sikhs did not become the target of terrorists. Unlike the Sant Nirankaris, the Namdhari Sikhs upheld the sanctity of the *Adi-*

Granth. They also upheld the supremacy of the Khalsa traditions of 18th and 19th centuries. Moreover, their life-style projected their image as the true Sikhs. Equally important was the common social background of the *Kharkus* and the Namdhari Sikhs. Majority of the Namdhari Sikhs and *Kharkus* were rural Sikhs. Besides, a few *Kharkus* also came from the Namdhari families. They and their associates tried to protect their kiths and kins. Like their counterparts, some influential Namdharis had access to the terrorist out-fits operating in their respective areas. The attack on the Namdhari families might have counter productive as it was in the case of Akali leaders and Jathedars. Inspite of these safety guards, some of the Namdhari families suffered at the hands of terrorists.

Towards the end of 20th century, some of the senior leaders of the Shiromani Akali Dal tried to build up political links with the Namdhari Sikhs. They often went to Bhaini Sahib headquarters and sought *Satguru's* blessings. On certain occasions, they addressed the Namdhari-sangats highlighting historical role played by the Namdhari Sikhs in the freedom struggle. They also took up the demands of the Namdhari Sikhs and ensured government help. Parkash Singh Badal, the then President of the Shiromani Akali Dal, took a lead in this regard and partly succeeded in making a dent in the traditional vote-bank of the Congress. It was he who in the capacity of Chief Minister of the Akali-Jan Sangh Coalition Government Punjab, allotted pieces of land where Namdhari Sikhs made sacrifices, gave financial aids to some projects and established the Namdhari Guru Ram Singh Chair, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar (2001). The Akali-Namdhari Sikh rapport, though limited, has been facilitated partly due to the relevance of religious minorities in the provincial–politics and partly due to the emergence of awakening among the influential section of the Namdhari Sikhs who realize that the Akalis (also other politicians) are as relevant as the Congress in the wake up of

the coalition-era. The Namdhari Sikhs operating at the ground level politics have started responding to the multi-party system.

Notes and References

1. Fauja Singh, *Kuka Movement*, Moti Lal Banarsi Das, Delhi, 1965, pp. 142-45, 147-48.
2. Bipan Chandra, Mridula Mukherjee, Aditya Mukherjee, *India After Independence 1927-2000*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 2000, p 30.
3. See, *Pravachan-His Holiness Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji*. (Compiler Harvendra Singh Hanspal), Namdhari Darbar, 2001, pp 63-68.
4. For, detail see, Pritam Singh Kavi, *Beete Dian Paidan*,Vol.2,6 New Delhi,1990,1995, pp 52,79,208,579. From 1966 to 1971 was period of Indira Gandhi's rise and consolidation of her hold over the Congress party as well as government. She became Prime Minister of India after the sudden death of Lal Bahadur Shastri in 1966. Morarji Desai's defeat in the Congress Parliamentary Party in 1967 further consolidated her power. In 1969, there was a split in the Congress over the presidency of India. Mrs Gandhi won the battle for the presidency with the election of her candidate, V.V Giri against the official Congress nominee, Sanjiva Reddy. In the parliamentary election in 1971 Mrs Indira Gandhi's Congress won a two third majority in the Lok Sabha. She became unquestionably the prominent leader of the country till she was challenged by Jayapraksh Narayan. He launched a movement against her authoritarian rule in 1974. On 12 June, the Allahabad High Court declared her election 1971 invalid. The opposition demanded her resignation vigorously. On 24 June 1975, she slammed Emergency rule in India. She imposed President's rule on Gujarat and Tamil Naidu and postponed parliamentary elections scheduled to be held in March 1976. Her young son Sanjay acquired dictatorial powers himself. Under the Emergency regime, censorship on the press was imposed; civil liberaties were curtailed, restrictions on the public offices and life were imposed and powers of the courts were reduced. Above all, Sanjay Gandhi implemented the programme sterilization and schemes of beautification of Delhi ruthlessly. Tens of thousands of opponents of Emergency regime were put into jail. Consequently, people routed her Congress party in the parliamentary elections held in 1977. Janta government under Morarji Desai as Prime Minister came into being. It lifted press censorship, restored civil liberaties and the Indian parliamentary system: Paul R Brass, *The Politics of India Since Independence*, Cambridge University Press, 2004 (reprint), pp 38-43.
5. Pritam Singh Kavi, *Beete Dian Paidan*, Vol.6, Pritam Singh Kavi Sahit Parkashan, New Delhi, 1995, pp 23-24-28.,56, 61, 383

6. Beant Kaur (ed.), *Ial Eh Rattan*,Vol V, Namdhari Darbar, Bhaini Sahib, Ludhiana, pp 133-37.
7. Joginder Singh, *Myth and Reality of Sikh Militancy in Punjab*, Shree Publishers, New Delhi,2006, pp 40-43
8. *Ibid.*
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APPENDIX – A

NAMDHARI *RAHIT-NAMA* AND NAMDHARI *ARDAS*

The Rahit-nama [issued by] the Twelfth Master

By the grace of the Eternal One, the True Guru.

From Ram Singh and the Khalsa of Bhaini to all members of the Khalsa. Accept our greeting: *Vahiguru ji ka Khalsa, Sri Vaheguru ji ki Fateh.* This rahit-nama has been written for the benefit of all sangats and has been issued from Bhaini. [1]

Rise during the lasts watch of the night and taking a pot of water [for cleansing] go into the fields to relieve yourself. When you return scour the pot twice, remove the clothes that you were wearing while in the fields, clean your teeth, bathe, and recite [the prescribed portions of] sacred.scripture. If you do not already know these by heart you should learn them. Everyone should do this, including women both old and young. Commit both *Japuji* and *Jap* to memory, and also *Shabad Hazare*. [2]

You must also learn *Rahiras* and *Arati Sohila* by heart. All should lead a life of restraint and contentment. Offer praise to the Guru, [the Lord] of Truth, throughout the day and night. [3]

Respect the daughter or the sister of another man as you would your own. The Guru has told us how we should regard the rights of others. [4]

Violating another's rights, Nanak, should be treated with the same abhorrence as a Muslim would feel for eating a pig or a Hindu would feel for killing a cow.1 [5]

He who fails to take initiation from the Guru and utters the Guru's mantra without first receiving it from him shall have his face blackened in this world and the next. [6]

Let no one speak maliciously of another. Be forgiving towards others, taking no account of what they may say about you. Even the person who strikes you must be forgiven. The Guru is your Protector. [7]

Always conceal you own good deeds from others. Gather to sing the sacred hymns regularly. Sing passages from the scripture daily. [8]

When a *jag* (*yajna*) is to be performed purify the place where it is to be held by plastering it. Bring earthen vessels that have not previously been used and wash your feet before entering the *jag* square. There perform the *havan*, or *hom*. Use wood from either the *palah* or the *ber* tree. Do not [fan the fire by] blowing it with human breath. During the course of the ritual fire service, [five officiants] should read the following from copies of the scripture: *Chaupai, Japuji, Jap, Chandi Charitr,* and *Akal Ustat*. A sixth officiant should meanwhile pour incense [on the fire] and a seventh should [intermittently] sprinkle a few drops of water on it. [9]

Do not admit to religious assemblies anyone who commits an evil deed such as adultery or theft. If the culprit happens to be a powerful person all should pray that he will be rendered unable to enter the congregation. [10]

But my understanding is limited. You yourselves know all that one needs to know. Let all stand reverently before the Almighty One (*paramesar*) with palms joined and pray: 'Sustain our faith, O Lord.' [11]

Always wear the approved kachh. When taking off a kachh withdraw one leg and put it in the leg-hole of another pair before withdrawing the second leg. Never conceal an evil deed committed by another person. Do not sell or barter a daughter or a sister. Constantly repeat the Guru's name. Never eat meat nor drink alcoholic liquor. Continue always in the fear of the Almighty One. [12]

The Namdhari Ardas

Victory to Vahiguru the Eternal One

May Sri Bhagauti grant assistance

[In the name of] the Twelfth Master

First remembering Sri Bhagauti turn your thoughts to Guru Nanak; Angad Guru, Amar Das, each with Ram Das, grant us aid. Arjan and Hargobind, think of them and Hari Rai. Dwell on Siri Hari Krishan, he whose sight dispels all pain. Think of Guru Tegh Bahadur; thus shall every treasure come. Grant us Guru Gobind Singh, help and strength in every place. Remember Guru Balak Singh, he who has shown us the way to truth. Remember Satguru Ram Singh, Master of our faith, and he who directs our worldly actions, he who knows our inmost thoughts, Sri Akal Purakh who sets us free from the grip of death. Remember Guru Hari Singh, light incarnate, he who heals and restores; and Satguru Partap Singh who in this present Age of Darkness has preached perfect piety, purity, the practice of repeating the divine Name and recitation of the scriptures. May they grant us help and strength in every place.

Remember the Master's four sons, the Cherished Five, and the Forty Liberated. Remember all martyrs to the faith; they who were faithful in their remembrance of the divine Name and generous to others; they who gave their heads for their faith, steadfast in their loyalty to the true teachings of Sikhism and defending their uncut hair to their last breath; they who fearlessly spoke the truth; they who for their faith wielded the sword and shared their sustenance with others; they who were blown away from guns, condemned to the horrors of transportation or to hanging, and who yet clung to their faith in the Satgurus. Meditate on the greatness of these stalwart disciples and call to mind the divine Name.

Guru and Master, we who are miserable sinners, having heard how you wondrously raise the fallen, cast ourselves at your door. Bestow on us, by your grace, the blessing of the Guru's teachings. Grant that we may be found only in the company of your faithful servants, never with the proud and worldly. May the commandments which you give as Guru in the Granth Sahib always be obeyed. Grant me the gift of faith in your commandments wherever I may be. Save me, Lord, from wavering in my faith. Grant that my love may be bestowed on none save only you. Preserve me ever. O Lord, from loss of faith in you.

All in this assembly pray that you will mercifully reveal yourself in all your glory. Bring to an end the killing of the poor and the cow, extend the true faith over the earth, free all who are imprisoned, destroy those who are evil, and exalt your true Khalsa (*sant khalsa*).

Our sins, O Lord, are many. Regards not our sins but mercifully bring us into your care and protection.

In your name we pray, and in the trust that we may behold your presence. Forgive the shortcomings of our prayer. Dwell within all our hearts that we may continue to sing your praises to eternity. May your Sikhs be victorious in all places and may they who have heard and sung your praises be sustained in all their deeds. Grant that we may behold your most sacred presence. May then name of Satguru Ram Singh be magnified and by your grace may all be blessed*.

*Cited in *Sikhs of the Khalsa* (W.H. McLeod), Oxford University Press, 2005, pp 344-347

APPENDIX-B
KUKA *SAKHIS* OR PROPHECIES*

Badh Tirath Sakhis
Translation of Sakhi No.1

Page I: - That in the year 1201 Hijri (A.D. 1786-87) the Khalsa will triumph.

- That in 1251 Hijri (A.D. 1835-36) the *Mahan Malech* (meaning the English) will come from another country and establish their rule.
- The English will go back after ruling 34 years.
- The 11th Guru will remain unrecognized; the 12th will be born in the family of a Bhais (sic).

The Guru is asked to relate the characteristics of the 12th Guru and the events leading to the expulsion of the *Mahan Malech* (or English), and replies as follows:-

- In 1278 Hijri (A.D. 1861-62) the *Sant Khalsa* (pious Khalsa) (the name assumed by the Kukas to distinguish themselves from orthodox Sikhs whom they call *Malech Khalsa* (unclean Khalsa) - will be widely extended.
- Tombs and mosques will be desecrated, and the Sikhs will protect the life of cows.
- In 1288 Hijri (A.D. 1871-72) the true Guru will be exiled.
- The true Guru will return in 5 years and bathe in Ramsar (the tank at Bhaini) and will afterwards go to Badh Tirath (Haripur, in the Sirsa district).

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* Jaswinder Singh, *Kuka Movement*, Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, 1985, pp 289-93.

- The Guru is asked: "In what year will the *Mahan Malech* (English) come to this country, and when will they go back to their own country?"

Page 2. – The 12th Guru will be the most perfect and the greatest; will be born as a carpenter's son; and will begin his devotions at the age of 5.

- Towards the end of the 13th (Muhammadan) century there will be a *Mahan Malech* (accursed evil-doer), a Christian Raja of an island, who will be very powerful and will banish the 12th Guru (Ram Singh) to a foreign land.
- Destruction of those who harass the Sikhs (Kukas).
- Five years after his banishment, the true Guru will speak from his own mouth, i.e. return.
- His influence will increase in his absence.
- When the ceremony of *Akhand Path* (continuous reading of the Granth right through) has been performed 2 ½ lakhs of times, the true Guru will return.
- He will remain many years in exile and will convert the people of the land where he is confined (Burmah).
- The sins of the people of Rangoon will be wiped away.

Details regarding the subversion of the British rule:-

- Bishen Singh (the Russian agent at Kabul) will appeal to the Czar of Russia to free the Kukas from the rule of *Mahan Malech* (i.e. the English).
- Russia will stop the road to India (through Egypt).
- War between Russia and Turkey predicted.

Page 3. – Russia will advance on the Punjab.

- In 1295 Hijri (A.D. 1877-78) the Russians will conquer the mountain tract (i.e. the frontier).
- In 1297 Hijri (A.D. 1879-80) Russia will enter the Madar Des (Punjab).

- One year after its conquest by the Russians, the Punjab will be restored by them to the Sikhs.
- About the time of this war the true Guru (Ram Singh) will return.
- Both brothers (Ram Singh and Budh Singh) will become powerful.
- A Sikh will become Delhi Raja (? Ram Singh will become king of India).
- All people will enjoy peace under the *Khalsa Raj*.
- The Khalsa will not be on terms with the *Malech* (i.e., the Kukas will not mix with the orthodox Sikhs ?).
- Bishen Singh and other absentees will meet again.
- The Sikh kingdom will increase in power and gain victories to east, south and west, and will conquer the foreign island.
- The people of the foreign island will fall at Ram Singh's feet.
- Whoever will not believe these prophecies is to be cut off from the congregation.

Religious war foretold.

- The Muhammadans will be killed in great numbers.
- The Khalsa (Sikh) will be the ruling power over the whole earth.
- All this will come to pass at the end of the 13th Muhammadan century, after the year 1293 Hijri (A.D. 1876) has passed.

Sakhi No. II

Page 3. – The great sanctity of the Prahlad Sagar (i.e., the Badh Tirath Tank at Haripur, in the Sirsa district).

Page 4. – The Khalsa Raj will come into power again in the time of the 12th Guru (i.e., in Ram Singh's time), who will be

born in the Bhai's caste and will appear in the 13th (Muhammadan) century.

- In the year 1251 Hijri (A.D., 1835-36) the *Mahan Malech* will come from the east and the Khalsa will be friendly to them.
- In 1278 Hijri (A.D., 1861-62) the Kuka sect will come into existence.
- For pulling down tombs and mosques and protecting kine, 80 persons will lose their lives.
- In 1288 Hijri (A.D., 1871-72) the true Guru will leave his country for a foreign land, but will return in 5 years.
- Not a single *Mahan Malech* will be left alive.
- The *Mahan Malech* will govern for 34 years. Then a *Malech* (? Russian) will come from the west, and there will be a great war. All the kings of the earth will meet and fight in one place.
- There will be such bloodshed at Peshawar that the horses will be up to their girths in blood.
- The same will occur at Lahore, and battles will also take place at Dehra Dun, Kabul, Jammu, Jamrud, Peshawar, Lahore, Firozpur and Ludhiana.
- High and, low alike will be slained, and there will be great confusion throughout the world. At 21 ½ miles from Delhi, all the *Rajas* will die, and Ram Singh will rule, and all will bow before him. This Ram Singh will be the son of a carpenter.

Page 5. – The Guru will retire to Badh Tirath (Haripur, in the Sirsa district), where all the Khalsa will take up their abode. The finding of the relics at Haripur foretold, and the signs by which they may be identified noted.

- The golden age will return with Ram Singh's reign.

- Hindus and Muhammadans will both be converted to the Kuka faith.
- The Christians will be destroyed in 1297 Hijri (A.D. 1879-80) and the Muhammadan power wane.

Sakhi No. III

Page 5. – There will be 14 Badshahs in all.

- Baba Balak Ram (Balak Singh of Hazro, founder of the Kuka sect) was the 11th Badshah; Ram Singh and Hari Singh will be the next two.
- The 12th Badshah will be born in Bijapur (Bhaini). Rama was appear as the 12th Guru.
- The 12th Incarnation will destroy the Muhmmadans; will take up his residence on the banks of the Sutlej and recover the Sikh treasure lost in the river.

Page 6. – Will establish his rule on the banks of the Sarja (the Gogre) in 1279 (? A.D., 1897-80).

- Asurs (demons – i.e., the English ?) will be destroyed. Only the 4 classes of Hindus will remain
- The Guru will travel round the world.
- Great misfortunes and slaughter will occur in the hills and to the north.
- Many will die of sickness. Darkness will prevail over Hindustan.
- A calamity will be fall from the east, and the ruler of India will be taken prisoner.
- Arabia will be deserted.

APPENDIX-C

THE DEPUTIES OR *SUBAS* UNDER NAMDHARI GURU RAM SINGH*

Sr. No.	Name	Father Name	Age	Profession/ Occupation	Adress	Areas of Preaching/ Activities	Remarks
1.	Jawahar Singh	S. Dal Singh	46 "	Cultivator	Bhai Ki Droli, Distt Ferozepur	Ferozepur and Adjoing Places	
2.	Kahan Singh	S. Natha Singh	60 "	Cultivator	Vadda Chak, Malerkotla	Hoshiarpur, Ambala and Malwa	He was a great Nihang
3.	Sahib Singh	S. Dial Singh	34 "	Cultivator	Bangalipur, Distt Amritsar	Personal Attendant of Baba Ram Singh	
4.	Lakha Singh	S. Rann Singh	28 "	Cultivator	Malodh, Distt. Ludhiana	Hoshiarpur and Jalandhar	Permanent Residing at Bhaini
5.	Darbara Singh	S. Mehtab Singh			Raipur, Distt. Ludhiana	Ludhiana Distt.	
6.	Sudh Singh	S. Ram Singh			Village Samri, Distt. Amritsar	Ambala, Majha and Malwa	
7.	Aroor Singh	S. Dial Singh	40 "	Carpenter	Village Bangalipur, Distt Amritsar	Karnal and Ambala	
8.	Mahan Singh	S. Makhan Singh			Saidoki, Distt. Ferozepur		

* cited in the *Sabhan Ke Sirmor*, (Tara Singh Anjan), Namdhari Darbar, Bhaini Sahib, Ludhiana, 1998, pp 206-220

9. Bhagwan Singh				Phatewal, Amritsar		
10. Sarmukh Singh	S. Vadhawa Singh	30 "	Carpenter	Dhilwan, Nabha	Patiala Territory	
11. Rattan Singh	Sh. Ram Krishan			Mandi Kalan, Sangrur		
12. Raja Singh	S. Jassa Singh			Trandi, Distt. Sialkot		
13. Zamiat Singh	S. Chanda Singh			Sialkot		
14. Brahma Singh	S. Gulab Singh	45 "	Cultivator	Dariapur, Karnal	Jalandhar, Gujranwala, Lahore and Sialkot	
15. Hukma Singh	S. Mehar Singh			Pitho, Nabha		
16. Malook Singh	?	35 "	Cultivator	Ablu, Distt Ferozepur	Around Ferozepur	
17. Narain Singh	S. Sangat Singh	32 "	Carpenter	Katra Sharmi, Distt Ludhiana	Mukatsar and Ferozepur	
18. Pahara Singh	Mr. Hema	37 "	Cultivator	Malodh Distt Ludhiana	Ludhiana and Gujranwala	
19. Jota Singh	S. Rattan Singh	35 "	Potter	Dhapaye, Distt Sialkot	Sialkot and Lahore Distts	
20. Khushal Singh	S. Karam Singh			Tharaj, Distt. Hisar		
21. Samund Singh	S. Wassawa Singh	40 "	Carpenter	Khote, Distt Ferozepur	Ferozepur Distt	
22. Khazan Singh	S. Mani Singh	35 "	Carpenter	Lidhana, Distt. Jalandhar	Lahore and Amritsar	
23. Gopal Singh	S. Sahib Singh	35 "	Cultivator	Rakhar Mahore, Patiala	Ludhiana	He ran a shop at Bhaini Sahib

APPENDIX — D

OFFICIAL PERCEPTIONS OF SOME *SUBAS**

(1) **Sahib Singh** (own statement) son of Dial Singh, of Banwalipur, Tarn Taran, Amritsar-aged 38, caste Carpenter. Became an Udasi Sadh about 9 years ago, before I became a Kuka. In 1916 Sambat went to Hazroh, and was made a Kuka by Balak Singh (Founder), who died in 1919. Balak Singh named Ram Singh as his successor. Ram Singh appointed no successor.

I was made a Subah five or six years ago. The first made Subahs were Kahn Singh, Sudh Singh and Jawahar Singh... A year and a quarter ago, I went to Nepal with Kahn Singh, Auttur Singh, Jewan Singh and two others with 2 mules and 2 buffaloes, the former for the Tika and the latter for the Rajah of Nepal.... There are some 15 or 20 Sikhs in the service of the Rajah of Nepal. One is an adjutant, another a Jemadar... My duties as Subah are to look after the stable and breeding establishment and sell the stock. I sold several horses at Hardwar a few years ago. The profits go to the Langer Khana (Free kitchen for all and at all times.) I go about with Ram Singh. I make Kukas.

Note : Intelligent, clever, and determined looking, much the abler of the Subahs.

Sd. J.W. Macnabb

(2) **Rur Singh** son of Dial Singh, caste Carpenter, aged 41, of Banwallpur. I now live and work in Amritsar, Have a family. Baba Ram Singh made me a Kuka in Sambat 1917 and was made an instructor of religion some five years ago.

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*Excerpts of the official reports Cited in *Rebels Against the British Rule*, pp 512-519; also see, Jaswinder Singh, *Kuka Movement: Documents 1880-1983*, pp 95, 188.

Was with Ram Singh at the Anandpur mela. It was after this Mela that I was allowed to impart the (Nam). I merely teach in the city.

Note : This does not seem a man of mark or character, probably owes his position to being Sahib Singh's brother. 24th April, 1872.

Sd./ J.W. Macnabb

(3) **Lukha Singh** son of Rana Singh, age 36 of Malodh, Ludhiana. I was formerly in the Sher-Dil regiment, and when it was broken up, was drafted into the police. I resigned in Sambat 1918.

I had been made a Kuka by Ram Singh in Ludhiana in 1916 or 1917, the famine year. I remained at Bhaini feeding his cattle and helping at the cooking house.

I was present at the Holi Mela at Khota in Ferozepur, also at the Baisakhi at Damdama Sahib.

Note : Looks a good for nothing.

Opinion

This man is clearly the most turbulent of the Subahs. There can be no doubt about his preaching sedition and his having seen Hira Singh's band off with encouraging words. He should remain in perpetual banishment.

Sd. J.W. Macnabb.
23 April, 1872.

(4) **Kahn Singh** alias Nihang Singh age 60, Caste Jat of Chak in Maler Kotla.

I was a Havildar, and Ram Singh a sipahi in Naonihal Singh's Regiment and used to be on duty with Brigade Major Mackson. I was made a Kuka in 1898 in Sher Singh's time by Balak Singh in Hazro, when Ram Singh was also made Kuka. Left the army, when it threw down its arms at Rawalpindi.

When Ram Singh was confined to Bhaini, I went to Mcleod Sahib (the Lieutenant Governor) and said, that the people were in great difficulties on account of the Baba (Ram Singh) not being able to go about to marriages and worship.

I was not with Baba Naina Singh in the disturbances made not by him but by this Chela. I was with my regiment. I went with Sahib Singh to Nepal to sell buffaloes and mules.

.... was at Hoshiarpur at the time of Amritsar murders .... and was placed under surveillance". At the time of Raikot murders, I was under orders from the police not to move into Hishiarpur". I have made Kukas of a Havildar, and some 15 men of the Hishiarpur police. I suffer from rupture, and cannot move about. I am also suffering from dysentery.

Note : I have had the greatest difficulty in getting anything out of this man. He is a cunning fellow, very much of the same stamp as Lukha Singh-not so intelligent as Sahib Singh.

Opinion

Kahn Singh is a man of much weight, certainly putting Mangal Singh aside, the third in importance among the Subahs. I would keep him in banishment for the rest of his life.

Sd./ J.W. Macnabb
25 April, 1872.

(5) **Brahma Singh** S/6 Gulab Singh about 50, Jat, village Duriapur-in Kaithal.

"I became an Udasi Sadh as a beardless youth. In Sambat 1916, returning from Kashmir met Balak Singh at Hazro and was made Kuka-not so. I was told the name (i.e. Ram Singh).

I was living in Gill in 1921, and met Ram Singh at Amritsar and came on with him to Bhaini. He told me that it was a great trouble to the people to come all the way from Sialkot and Gujranwala to Bhaini and to be made Kukas, and that I should undertake the business. I excused myself and said, I wanted to be quiet. He said, you must do it, and I undertook it. I go about, where people ask me. Jetha Singh is in the same district and we sometimes go together, sometimes separately.....

I did teach the women to wear the Kuch. The people hate me, because I tell them not to steal or kill their infants, or sell their daughters or sisters, therefore they tell lies about me.

Note : Seems to me a really religious man. May become enthusiastic when excited.

Sd. J.W. Macnabb.
The 24th April, 1872.

Opinion

There can, I think, be no doubt that Brahma Singh has, for some years past, been systematically preaching sedition.

..... He seems to me more of a religious enthusiast and less of a mere political adventurer than the others. Such a character acting Sikh sentimentality would be only the more dangerous in times of excitement.

Banishment for life as in the cases of Sahib Singh, Kahn Singh and Lakha Singh.

Sd. J.W. Macnabb

(6) **Jawahar Singh** son of Dal Singh of Daroli (Bhai), Police Station Dakroo, Tehsil Moga, age 50, Caste Jat.

My father died, when I was 5 years old. I used to cultivate "but became a Nirmla Sadh in Sambat 1905, and have wandered all over the country, was four years in Benaras.

I became a Kuka in Sambat 1917. I found, they were good people. I also became Sadh of a well at Bilaspur in Moga.

Was made Subah seven years ago .... Narain Singh has gone to the South"... I always go with Ram Singh to all Melas. I was at the Diwail, at Maghi and at Anandpur.

Note : Jawahar Singh seems a genuine Fakir and does not look to me dangerous, but evidently keeps back a good deal that he knows. A great deal of the above was extracted with difficulty from him.

J.W. Macnabb.
25th April, 1872.

Opinion

I recommend that Jawahar Singh's banishment be perpetual.

J.W. Macnabb.

(7) **Maluk Singh** son of Sukha Singh age 39 years, village Phullewala, Mukatsar in Ferozepur.

"Ram Singh made me a Kuka at Bhaini in 1921 Sambat. After two years, I was made a Subah.

23rd April, 1872.

Opinion

It appears that Maluk Singh was an influential and seditious fanatic in Feb. 1869. "He may be allowed to return after 2 years, on condition of remaining at his home, under the surveillance of the police and never to attend fairs or meeting of any kind.

Sd./ J.W. Macnabb.

(8) **Man Singh** son of Makhan Singh of Saideki in Ferozepur 40 years of age, Jat.

I was made a Kuka by Ram Singh in Sambat 1922. I am a cultivator. I am not a Subah, "NAM DENEWALA". The other prisoners are Subahs. I am not sure about Mangal Singh, being a Subah, but he is a great Sikh. The Nam is "WAH GURU".

Note : He made a great fuss about saying this and repeats it afterwords "within his teeth", as I was previously told was "Ram Singh's order".

Note : This man seems a harmless quiet fellow-a very ordinary Jat Sikh.

Sd./ J.W. Macnabb

23rd April, 1872.

Opinion

Although not a Subah, he holds very nearly the same position and an active propagandist.... I recommend his being allowed to return in three years, if things have quieted down. He should not, under any circumstances, return, along with Maluk Singh, as he belongs to the same part of the country.

If allowed to return, it should be under the same restrictions as recommended for the others.

Sd. J.W. Macnabb.

(9) **Hukma Singh** village Pitoke in the Nabha State, age 35, caste Jat.

"I was made Kuka by Ram Singh at Bhaini, Sambat 1914, and was made Subah in Sambat 1923. Previous to being made Kuka, I was a Nirmala Sadh and have only visited my village occasionally for the last 20 years; have no family. I live at Bhaini, and copy holy books (Pothies) and if any one wants the "Nam", I give it then".

Remarks from summary of evidence.

"a zealous Subah, always with Ram Singh.... generally preaching sedition".

(Sd.) J.W. Macnabb

23rd April, 1872.

Opinion

Hukma Singh does not seem a man of much mark or importance.... He has been for years the close personal attendance on Ram Singh and has been employed for copying Pothies (holy books) and that the books found on Kukas are generally seditious in their tendency .... I think he might be sent back in a year's time, if all is quiet, and made over to the Raja of Nabha who would willingly see that he lives quietly under police surveillance at his village of Pithoki, neither holding meetings nor attending fairs.

(Sd.) J.W. Macnabb.

(10) **Pahara Singh** son of Hema, caste Jat, age 42, of Malodh.

"I was in Sirdar Mit Singh's service, but gave it in the mutiny year and became a Nirmala Sadh... Ram Singh made me a Kuka in Sambat 1917, and five years ago, I was made a Subah.

I have since then lived at Syar (a village in the Dehlon police station, Ludhiana district). At Syar, there are many of my relations, also many "Nambhai" Kukas. I always go about with Ram Singh to all melas, was with him at Amritsar, also Anandpur, at Kotha, but not at Damdama".

Note : A fanatical, dangerous looking man ..... There is however a good deal of determination in his face.

(Sd.) J.W. Macnabb.

Opinion

Pahara Singh is undoubtedly a Subah of much influence and decidedly of a dangerous character.

He may have less influence, but I am inclined to think him more dangerous than Brahma Singh, and would recommend his remaining in banishment for ten years, after which his case may be considered with reference to the state of the country, if at all allowed to return, he should remain under police surveillance in the village and be prohibited from holding meetings or attending fairs.

(Sd.) J.W. Macnabb.

(11) **Sardar Mangal Singh** of Bishanpura, in Patiala and Raipur-Ludhiana *statement.* Some five years ago, or perhaps more, my son was ill, and I was advised to take him to Ram Singh. He cured him, and I became a believer in Ram Singh, but never formally a Kuka. Without doubt, I used to give largely Rs. 200/-, Rs. 300/-, Rs. 400/- to Ram Singh, because he is a holy man. I saw, that the Kukas were giving trouble, and that government was displeased with them, I gave up Kukaism. This was about a year and

a half ago. If government will release me I will go and publicaly recant at the Akal Bunga at Amritsar. I have taken to eating flesh and drinking wine, since I renounced Kukaism".

Note : This is a short man, rather a long tongue.

Opinion

There can be no doubt, that in some respects Sardar Mangal Singh is Ram Singh's most important follower. His joining the Kukas had more effect in furthering the cause than any event which has lately occurred . . .

On the other hand Mangal Singh looks like a man, who could go in for a great venture and no one, not even Ram Singh himself, was in a position to profit more by a restoration of the Sikh Raj by Kuka means . . .

Sardar Mangal Singh, however, is Maharaja's prisoner, and not ours, and I believe, I shall not be expected to pass any opinion in the case from his point of view . . .

I would only protest against half-measures with this particular man. He should either be allowed to return at once, or be kept in perpetual banishment.

(Sd.) J.W. Macnabb.

(12) **Baba Gurcharan Singh** s/o Atar Singh, Virk Jat of Chakparana in the Sialkot district was a medium of communication between Russian authorities in Central Asia and the Kukas in Punjab.

Gurcharan Singh, Ex-Soldier of the Khalsa Army was became a Kuka in 1867 and soon afterwards made a Suba by Guru Ram Singh. He visited Kabul, Ghazni and other places many times and made converts. After the deportation of Guru Ram Singh, Gurcharan Singh was the most active Kuka moving

between Punjab and Central Asia to persuade the Russians for giving help. He was about 75 years old, Evan at this stage he was very strong. According to Government records:—

"Though an old man he is physically very strong and active undergoing great fatigue. He is remarkably erect and a very good specimen of a Sikh soldier."

On a secret information, given by Gulab Khan, Gurcharan Singh was arrested in May 1881 and placed under personal restraint at Mooltan under Regulation III of 1818.

Gurcharan Singh was released from surveillance on 7th September 1886.

(13) **Bishen Singh Arora** of Kabul: he was said to have been converted to the Kuka faith by Balak Singh of Hazro and was in touch with Guru Ram Singh.

On the 28th August 1880, the District Superintendent of Police, Ludhiana, reported that Joga Singh of Dhulkot, in the Firozpur district, said that "12 years ago he accompanied Guru Ram Singh to Hazro, in the Rawalpindi district, where they met Bishen Singh, who stated he was a resident of Kabul, and was in the confidence of the Sardars, who employed him in collecting information about Hindustan. He said that at times he used to live in Peshawar. Joga Singh again met Bishen Singh at the Anandpur fair in the Hoshiarpur district, about 10 years ago. He said that the Sakhis (prophecies) recovered from the Badh Tirath tank at Haripur in the Sirsa district, foretell that Bishen Singh will lead a Muhammadan army across the North-West Frontier into the Punjab, and added that Bishen Singh is in communication with the Russians, as also are twelve other Kukas who escaped from Maler Kotla after the disturbances of 1872, and made their way to Russian territory."

"The Kukas are at present in a state of excitement; they hold frequent consultations, and Baba Budh Singh of Bhaini (the Kuka leader) is visited by men from distant place. One Bishen

Singh, Arora, a Kuka of great wealth, has agencies in Peshawar, Kabul, Bokhara, and Russian territory, and is the medium of communication between the Russians and Budh Singh. Russian emissaries in disguise meet Budh Singh's agents through Bishen Singh's assistance."

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APPENDIX-E

Subas under Namdhari Guru Hari Singh*

1. Harnam Singh, Mandi (Patiala)
2. Samund Singh, Khote (Ferozepur)
3. Phula Singh, Chogawan (Amritsar)
4. Kahn Singh, Baja (Faridkot)
5. Gurdit Singh alias Gurdas Singh, Naiwala (Patiala)
6. Khazan Singh, Ludhiana.
7. Matha Singh, Gardiwala (Freozepur)
8. Khushal Singh, Tharajwala (Sirsa)
9. Fateh Singh, Valtoha.

*Fauja Singh, *Kuka Movement*, p. 140.

APPENDIX-F

Subas under Namdhari Guru Partap Singh.*

1. Fateh Singh Manga	Lahore
2. Jagat Singh Khanduwali	Sialkot
3. Harnam Singh Bhoiwali	Amritsar
4. Zawand Singh-Jinda Shahid	Montgomery
5. Mahi Singh-Neelianwali	Bahawalpur
6. Bishan Singh Bhadaur	Patiala
7. Chanan Singh Mehemawali	Faridkot
8. Mihan Singh Gurusar	Ferozepur
9. Mehal Singh Philloke	Gujaranwala
10. Pt. Besant Singh Padhanewale	Jallandhar, Doaba
11. Mansha Singh Bharthala	Ludhiana
12. Waryam Singh Molleywale	Ambala
13. Banta Singh	Sargodha
14. Seth Dial Singh	Siam-Thailand
15. Bhagwant Singh	U.P. area
16. Kahn Singh	Lucknow
17. Ganga Singh	Gujarat
18. Mehtab Singh	Rawalpindi
19. Amar Singh Haripur	Hazara
20. Dal Singh	Sindh-Hyderabad
21. Inder Singh Ghuke Wali	Multan
22. Gurbax Singh Chak	Malerkotla

**Satjug*, Lahore, 6 March 1921, p. 2.

23.	Mehtab Singh Gill	Sheikhupura
24.	Nidhan Singh Alam	Lahore City
25.	Tehal Singh Sadhwali	Lyallpur
26.	Amar Singh	Bhaini Sahib
27.	Lal Singh	Nabha
28.	Sant Singh	Kashmir
29.	Bhishan Singh	Gurdaspur
30.	Wazir Singh Hazro	Cambellpur

APPENDIX-G

Subas under Namdhari Guru Jagjit Singh*

Sr. No.	Name	Town/Village	City	State
1.	Mela Singh S/o Inder Singh	Village Rashin	Distt Ludhiana	Punjab
2.	Kartar Singh S/o Bishan Singh	Village HothianP.O. Lal Singh, Teh. Batala	Gurdaspur	Punjab
3.	Sada Singh S/o Veer Singh	VPO Kariwala,	Sirsa	Haryana
4.	Surjit Singh S/o Sadhu Singh	P.O. Kutbewal	Jalandhar	Punjab
5.	Jasbir Singh S/o Bhajan Singh	Village Padi Khalsa, P.O. Birk	Distt Jalandhar	Punjab
6.	Baldev Singh S/o Bhajan Singh	Ellanbad	Distt Sirsa	Haryana
7.	Seva Singh S/o Jagat Singh	140, Hamidha	Yamuna Nagar	Haryana

*Information provided by the Bhaini Sahib headquarters.

8.	Bibi Mohinder Kaur W/o Late S. Mohinder Singh	M/s Fine Good Engg. Works, Sathay Hari Road,	Hoshiarpur	Punjab
9.	Amrik Singh S/o Harnam Singh	Kainthal Road, Ward No.11, Asandh	Distt Karnal	Haryana
10.	Harbhajan Singh S/o Sardara Singh	H.No. 2608-I, Urban Estate, Dugri	Ludhiana	Punjab
11.	Ajit Singh S/o Banta Singh	New Namdhari Foundry, Kanhuwal Road,	Batala	Punjab
12.	Gurcharan Singh S/o Tirlok Singh	Namdhari Emporium, Geeta Bhavan	Distt. Ferozpur	Punjab
13.	Bibi Surinder Kaur Kharal W/o S. Bhagwant Singh	Namdhari Engg. Works, Kurali Road	Ropar	Punjab
14.	Amrik Singh S/o Dalip Singh	Village Gadhsahad, P.O. Mehmoodhpur	Distt Ferozepur	Punjab
15.	Sarabjit Singh S/o Rattan Singh	Namdhari House, Ford Road	Gwalior City	MP
16.	Balkar Singh S/o Dalip Singh	P.O. Sant Nagar	Distt Sirsa	Haryana

17.	Jarnail Singh S/o Rup Singh	Myserkhanna House, Barnala Road, Harpal Nagar	Bathinda	Punjab
18.	Darshan Singh S/o Ajaib Singh	Village Raisar, Teh. Barnala	Barnala	Punjab
19.	Gurjant Singh S/o Ajmer Singh	Village Joud Kiya	Distt Hanumangarh	Rajasthan
20.	Sukhdev Singh S/o Balwant Singh	F-56, Bali Nagar	New Delhi	New Delhi
21.	Jagir Singh S/o Jaimal Singh	P.O. Chapya Wali,Teh. Malout	Distt Mukatsar	Punjab
22.	Harbhajan Singh S/o Amar Singh	M/s Amar Watch Co., Morinda	Distt Ropar	Punjab
23.	Suvinder Singh S/o Charan Singh	Village Dera Mir Miya, P.O. Sirhind	Distt. Fathegarh Sahib	Punjab
24.	Gurmukh Singh S/o Bakshish Singh	House No.1085, Sector-18 C	Chandigarh	Chandigarh
25.	Joginder Singh S/o Havela Singh	152, Aman Nagar, Sodal Road	Jalandhar	Punjab

26.	**Mokham Singh S/o Virsa Singh**	Sarkaria Enclave, Kothi No. 1925, Near Central Jail	Amritsar	Punjab
27.	**Sukhwinder Singh S/o Surjit Singh**	Village Litt, P.O. Ramgarh	Distt. Kapurthala	Punjab
28.	**Bhagat Singh S/o Swaran Singh**	Village Rajpur, P.O. Dandia Nagla, Teh. Bahadi	Distt. Barelli	Uttar Pradesh
29.	**Ratan Singh S/o Kartar Singh**	Village Rajra, Teh. Samana	Distt. Patiala	Punjab
30.	**Gurdial Singh S/o Kartar Singh**	Shingar Store, Sunder Nagar	Distt. Mandi	Himachal Pradesh
31.	**Balwinder Singh S/o Pala Singh**	Village- Jhall, P.O. Amargarh	Distt. Sangrur	Punjab
32.	**Mani Singh**	M/s Ramhari Timber Store, Nangal Chowk	Ropar	Punjab
33.	**Gurmeet Singh S/o Mahinder Singh**	Ramnagar	Mandi	Himachal Pradesh
34.	**Jagtar Singh S/o. Swaran Singh**	Sahibabad	Distt. Gaziabad	Uttar Pradesh

35.	Sukhdev Singh	Jammu	Jammu	Jammu & Kashmir
36.	Charanjit Singh	23/18, Mohalla Dogran	Hissar	Haryana
37.	Amrik Singh	Village Garhi Sahib,	Patiala	Punjab
38.	Paramjit Singh	H.No.2602, Sector 20-A	Chandigarh	Chandigarh
39.	Gurjet Singh	Jaurkian		
40.	Tirath Singh	Mukerian	Hoshiarpur	Punjab
41.	Major Singh	Malaut	Mukatsar	Punjab
42.	Masa Singh	Gwalior	Gwalior	M.P.
43.	Jaimal Singh	Mandi	Mandi	H.P.
44.	Harpal Singh	Bangalore	Bangalore	Karnataka
45.	Manjeet Singh	Baddi Road, Balachaur	Hoshiarpur	Punjab
46.	Harbans Singh Doshi	Shiv Ji Nagar, Near Hanuman Mandir	Nanded	Maharashtra
47.	Savinder Singh	Village Dera Mir Mira P.O. Sirhind City	Fatehgarh Sahib	Punjab
48.	Resham Singh	8, Ridgefielder, Maple Ont. LGA-139		Canada

49.	Satnam Singh	Bangalore	Bangalore	Karnataka
50.	Satwinder Singh	P.O. Box 308, Kisumu	Kenya	Kenya
51.	Gurmit Singh	-	Mandi	H.P.
52.	Mahinder Kaur		Thailand	
53.	Hardeep Singh	Zira	Ferozepur	Punjab
54.	Natha Singh* ( )	Krishan Nagar, New Abadi, Rly. Phatak, Chheharta	Amritsar	Punjab
55.	Bhagat Singh	Dera Baba Kala Singh Ji Namdhari, Village Mahadipur, Kotla Gujjran, Fatehgarh Churian	Amritsar	Punjab
56.	Rattan Singh	Village Rajla, Teh. Samana	Distt. Sangrur	Punjab
57.	Surinder Singh Namdhari	Namdhari Shaheedi Samarak, New Civil Hospital, Jail Road	Ludhiana	Punjab

*striped of his designation.

APPENDIX-H

Members of the Namdhari Darbar in 1921:*

1. Sant Mangal Singh 'Arshi Frishta'
2. Sant Harnam Singh Ragi
3. Pt. Basant Singh Padhana
4. Sant Inder Singh Chakarvarti
5. Budh Singh Khanpur
6. Pt. Amar Singh
7. Surat Singh Bhikhshu Khatran
8. Gurbax Singh, Chak Kukian
9. Natha Singh Cheleke
10. Sant Zawand Singh Jinda Shahid-Khiala
11. Sant Kesar Singh Chawinda
12. Dhaya Singh Kakkar
13. Rattan Singh Kuka Sandhwan
14. Jang Singh Bilga
15. Paritam Singh Seth
16. Laxman Singh Chhattewali Kharal
17. Mastan Singh Kiampur
18. Pt. Munsha Singh
19. S. Arbel Singh
20. Bishan Singh Bhadana
21. Bhagat Singh Datewal
22. Mastan Singh Raisar

*Satjug, July 1939 (Assu 1995) pp 1-5.

23. Mekh Singh Mahuwal
24. Khazan Singh Mazahbi
25. Atama Singh
26. Tehal Singh Saidowal
27. Ishar Singh Khanpur
28. Dhara Singh Jia Bagga
29. Lali Singh Dhillwan
30. Anakha Singh Datewali

APPENDIX — I

Some Prominent Namdhari Sikhs of Thailand*

1. Seth Ajit Singh (President of Namdhari Sangat)
2. Seth Piara Singh (Vice-President)
3. Seth Surinder Singh (Secretary)
4. Seth Gurcharan Singh (Treasurer)
5. Seth Joginder Singh (Vice Treasurer)
6. Seth Rachhpal Singh
7. Seth Suhail Singh
8. Seth Narain Singh
9. Seth Narain Singh Gorowarha of Benka Cheema
10. Seth Piara Singh
11. Seth Avtar Singh (Jaspal Store)
12. Seth Kirpal Singh (Firm Ishar Singh Kirpal Singh)
13. Seth Kartar Singh (Jiwan Textiles Firm)
14. Seth Narain Ji Sethi (Sri India Firm)
15. Seth Harbans Singh (Indo-Thai-Firm)
16. Suba Seth Dial Singh M/s D.S. Ladha Singh
17. Seth Mohar Singh and Ajit Singh (M/s M.S. Ajit Singh)
18. Seth Piara Singh Narula (M/s Gurmukh Traders)
19. Sh. Kartar Singh Chawla (M/s K.S. Gurcharan Singh)
20. M/s Bhagat Singh-Urram Singh
21. M/s Ishar Singh Kirpal Singh
22. M/s Ajit Singh and Brothers
23. Sh. Surinder Singh, Harbhajan Singh (Republic Textiles)
24. Sh. Mukand Ji (M/s Mukand Singh & Sons)

* Tabulated from *Satjug: Siam Ank*, June, 1962, 14, 50-51

25. Sant Nand Singh Khurana (M/s Delhi Store)
26. Sant Ishar Singh Daler
27. Seth Narain Singh Chawla (M/s Asian Fabrics)
28. Sh. Hardial Singh Matte (M/s Bangkok Store)
29. Sh. Tarlochan Singh Chawla (M/s B.E. Chawla Electricals)
30. Sh. Sudarshan Singh Chawla (M/s Thai Textiles)
31. Sh. Shingara Singh Jagat Singh (M/s Ruam Chai Fanit)
32. Sant Gurbax Singh Hans, Gurcharan Singh (M/s G.S. Brothers)
33. Sh. Avtar Singh Chawla (M/s J.S. Phola Singh & Company)
34. Sh. Darshan Singh Gorawara
35. M/s Lala Store
36. M/s Sri Asia
37. Sant Dial Singh Sachdeva
38. Sh. Darshan Singh Manchanda
39. Sh. Hari Singh Badraja
40. Sh. Kirpal Singh Badraja
41. Sh. Tirath Singh Badraja
42. Sh. Kishan Singh
43. Sh. Hardial Singh
44. Sant Puran Singh Gorowara
45. Sant Banta Singh
46. Sant Mansa Singh

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The present volume briefly analyses the transformation in the Namdhari mission, strategy and organisation during the period of the last hundred fifty years since its inception. In the mid 19th century, the Namdhari Guru Balak Singh perceived his mission of socio-religious reforms in terms of *sehajdhari* traditions. His successor, Namdhari Guru Ram Singh transformed this mission in terms of reviving the Khalsa tradition. He formed Sant Khalsa in 1857, evolved a system of mass mobilisation and confronted British raj for the restoration of the Khalsa raj. In early 20th century, Namdhari mission underwent another radical transformation when Namdhari Guru Partap Singh integrated his movement with the national struggle. In the post-independence period, his son and successor, Namdhari Guru Jagjit Singh exhorted his followers to practice the tradition of *nam-simran* and believe in the policy of communal harmony and co-existence.

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